

***The Kashmir
Struggle
from
Peoples'
Perspective***

A Collection

September, 2019

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The Comrade Publications

Communist Party Reorganization Centre of India
Marxist - Leninist

Kashmir Developments:

The Open Logic of a Dacoit Replaces Nehruvian Camouflage

The cat is out of the bag. On August 5, New Delhi brought the long story of Indo-Kashmir relations to its climax; a story which has always been a story of treachery, betrayals and tyranny for people of Kashmir. Modi Shah regime has now manifested this policy of the Indian state in its crudest expression. It has thrown away the last traces of Nehruvian camouflage with contempt and is orchestrating the pure logic of a dacoit more openly; nevertheless it remains the same policy in content. The moral of the story is that the faces of dacoits and marauders are not compatible with masks. The latter, according to this moral, are the robes suitable only for the faces of the weak and the infirm.

The policy, now at the height of its true colours, needed nothing more than a presidential order for scrapping the article 370. The article 370 had already been reduced to almost a lifeless skeleton. Only its delayed ceremonial burial has taken place now along with the newly murdered article 35A. Jammu and Kashmir now does not exist even as a state. It has been wiped out along with its own constitution from the list of the Indian states. That constitution is now an item in the archives of history just like the past of J&K as an independent state. The flag of Jammu and Kashmir, a symbol of its independent past as well as yet unsettled future unfurling at the top of the state secretariat in the capital, has also been arrogantly thrown into the dust.

The 'democracy' of India is now hyperactive. The trishule in its hands has already cut the territory of Jammu and Kashmir, arbitrarily, into two pieces i.e. Ladakh and Jammu &

Kashmir. Both are now reduced to Union Territories, the latter with a provision for a legislature and the former without a legislature. The newly imposed Jammu and Kashmir re-organisation act is part of an unconcealed roadmap. The newly carved out piece of Jammu and Kashmir is vulnerable to further bifurcation at any time suitable to the present regime in New Delhi.

The Constitution in Occupation

The essence of these moves is to bring Jammu & Kashmir tightly under direct governance from New Delhi. It is not to be left with any meaningful constitutional, institutional, legal and administrative space of its own. The thrust is that the Constitution of India must grab whole of that space. It must operate unbridled in J&K as ***the constitution in occupation***. The purpose of domesticating the defiant nationality of Kashmir makes it urgent. It can no more be done with help of stooges who are now too discredited to play the role of a local political buffer between New Delhi and the people of Kashmir. So, the region is now under the sole writ of the Constitution of India which runs in Kashmir on the wheels of military occupation.

Actually, article 370, for the Nehruvian leadership was the instrument to achieve the same through camouflage. That leadership was quite careful to allay the apprehensions of Indian ruling classes. That is why it emphasised the role of article 370 as best in smuggling the Indian constitution into Kashmir. For example Home Minister Gulzari Lal Nanda said in his statement on December 4, 1965, "***The only avenue of taking the constitution into Jammu and Kashmir*** is through the application of the provisions of article 370.... article 370 is neither a wall nor a mountain, ***but that it is a tunnel***. It is

through this tunnel that a good deal of traffic has already passed and more will." (Emphasis added throughout the writing.) Nehru himself had drawn attention to the actual fate of article 370 in parliament on November 27, 1963. He said, "***It has been eroded***, if I may use the word...."

However, these measures are not merely an overreach of constitutional powers by the Indian state. These have been preceded and continue to be followed by a prolonged lockdown of people in Kashmir with additional deployment of military in tens of thousands in the already highest militarized zone in the world. Shah Faesal, an IAS officer who had recently resigned in protest over Kashmir issue has commented: "Kashmir is experiencing an unprecedented lockdown. You can say 8 million of population has been incarcerated like never before." People faced complete choking of all the communication and were kept in total darkness about what was in store for people in Kashmir. Communication networks remain only partially restored even after a month. The number of arrests was in hundreds in the initial days and included prominent faces of the regional political leadership.

The hardly managed unjust peace and silence imposed on people faced eruptions of protests. News about the glimpses of protests percolated in the midst of denials from New Delhi. Hospitals confirmed the presence of pellet-injured. Media has also reported about the use of bullets and two human casualties. Shopkeepers chose to remain on Hartal in day time and opening the shops only in the morning and evening. International media covered the news of a demonstration from Srinagar with participation reaching ten thousands in the initial days of the lock down. Restrictions had to be repeatedly

re-imposed after brief relaxations.

All this has indicated the underlying wrath of Kashmiri nationality waiting for an opportune combination of favourable factors to re-emerge and restore its vigour in a process.

People of Kashmir continue to live under the tyrannical rule of New Delhi for decades. Their urge for self-determination could not be crushed. It is the clash between the growing mass assertion of an oppressed nationality for its right to self-determination and an oppressive autocratic state bent upon crushing its free will which lies at the root of the present Kashmir struggle. In spite of all the deceptive as well as repressive tools in application for crisis management by the Indian state, the real content of the issue come into focus again and again. Imposition of black laws, butchering of thousands of Kashmiris, merciless use of pellet guns and curfews have remained unsuccessful in taming the Kashmir nationality. ***Kashmir remains not only unstable but also a challenge for stability of the Indian state.*** The present drastic measures only indicate the severity of the crisis.

Majority section of ruling classes has come into the support of the Indian Constitution as the constitution in occupation in Kashmir. Other than Shiv Sena these include parties like BSP, BJD, Aam Aadmi Party, SAD, Telugu Desam Party, YSR Congress, AIADMK, Assam Gan Parishad etc. as well as a section from within the Congress party.¹ But those who are criticising are doing it with reference to the

¹Such a behavior indicates that non BJP ruling class parties are ever prone to bring their own variety of national chauvinism in line with the designs of the communal BJP camp because of the considerations of their opportunist electoral politics.

constitution of India, not with a reference to the will of the people of Kashmir for self-determination and against the very imposition on them of the Indian Constitution itself. The second aspect of their criticism is more revealing about where does their actual concern lie. They are worried that scrapping of article 370 has pushed India into a number of "grey areas" which actually weaken the claims of India on Kashmir, make its positions contradictory and harm the claim about Kashmir as the integral part of India. (see congress MP Manoj Tiwari's speech in Indian parliament, The tribune, July 20, 2019) Actually, such a variety of criticism reflects the unity of will among the ruling classes on refusing the people of Kashmir their right to self-determination, and their difference on the mere question of the best way of such a denial.

Peoples' forces must demarcate with the ruling class frame of criticism which directly or indirectly legitimize the subordination of the will of people in Kashmir to the writ of the constitution of India. ***With this rider in place***, any opposition to the retrogressive steps for unbridled sway of Indian Constitution over Kashmir should be taken as an objectively favourable factor for resistance to these steps.

In this context, the issue of the constitutional validity of the drastic steps taken by present BJP regime is not the primary issue as far as the struggle of people in Kashmir and the solidarity of people of India with them is concerned. This aspect has a secondary significance mainly from the point of view of exposure.

The discussion in preceding paragraphs poses the question of placing of and attitude towards restoration of article 370 and other associated immediate demands, flowing from the recent offensive of BJP regime in the name of

constitution. There are two observations discussed above regarding article 370. One is its already virtual reduction to a life-less skeleton and the other is the designs of Indian state to use it as the "tunnel" to make the capture of Kashmir by deception permanent. In spite of the correctness of these observations, the euphoria built-up against article 370 and its consequent scrapping must be resisted because it is aimed at breaking the morale of people of Kashmir to struggle for self-determination. The other associated steps also serve the same purpose. The message is "forget about the right to self-determination; the right to determine the status of Kashmir even as part of India is reserved in hands of the Indian state." On the other hand, any blows of peoples' reaction in Kashmir against the steps for pushing them to the wall reflect their urge to get rid of the "Badshahi". In this context, the demand for restoration of article 370 (certainly in its past un-eroded form) and 35-A as well as the cancellation of recent Jammu and Kashmir reorganization act *do have their immediate relevance but only as the part of democratic demands for right to self-determination, roll back of the Indian Constitution as the constitution in occupation, withdrawal of the armed forces as well as the cancellation of armed forces special powers act and other black laws.*

Indian State Speaks the Language of Aggressors

Behaviour of the regime in New Delhi betrays the increasing desperation for a military 'solution'. There is nothing to be surprised if the job of speaking about the 'solution' is largely assigned to the defence ministry and the military chief. In July, Defence minister Rajnath Singh visited Kashmir to declare: "Problem of Kashmir will get solved. No power in the world can stop it. *If someone does not want a*

solution through talks, then we know very well how a solution can be found" (www.punjabtribune.com, July 20, 2019).² Actually the dye had been cast much earlier. In Feb 2017, Gen. Rawat had declared that people who "are not supportive" to military "operations during encounters" would "be treated as over ground workers of terrorists". He threatened "the local population" to face consequences, if it fails to desist "the local boys" from such "acts of terrorism". He said, the Army would "treat them as anti-national elements and go helter-skelter for them". Thus, he openly announced the obliteration of distinction between civilian population and armed combatants. Arun Jaitley, the defence minister at that time advocated free hand for army saying that "in a war Zone" the Army should not "have to consult members of parliament". (*Frontline; August 30, 2019*). Now the voice of the Army chief has gone much more aggressive. He is for the killing of "local militants" with no care for any military norms. He has spoken to mean that now they are doomed to die but not as militants with guns in their hands. Instead of taking into custody for a trial they will be killed disarmed. The message is clear in his following words: "Any local militant picking up a gun against the security forces will no longer be a militant. The gun and the

² To have a view about the common tyrannical thread of the ruling class response to the will of the people in Kashmir, compare the above statement with the following: "... the administration was of the view that the problem could only be solved by '**bringing the people into submission**'. (Union Minister for Railways, George Fernandes, May 20, 1990) "**The issue (in Kashmir) is not lives....** The issue is the durability of the Indian State. And the Indian State cannot be allowed to break **at any risk.**" (Union Minister for Foreign Affairs, I.K. Gujral, April 22, 1990)

man will be separated. The man will go to the grave and gun will be with us". (*The Tribune*, July 27, 2019).

Not only that, speaking about Kashmir in terms of a mere piece of ownership, the Army chief has gone much farther to convey that the only pending issue regarding Kashmir is how to bring the Pakistan occupied Kashmir under India's occupation, which, he means to say, is to be decided unilaterally by India. Otherwise, for him, Kashmir is a non-issue. He is speaking openly in jingoist language of typical aggressors. "The Tribune" published the following regarding his statement: "The Army Chief said India had complete right over the state of Jammu & Kashmir, including the area under Pakistan control. "It is a political decision how to control (complete state). Whether it has to be done diplomatically or **through other means**, it will be done according to the decision" he said. (ibid) He does not bother if POK never remained a part of India, was independent when occupied and its people have every right for restoration of their freedom.

The sharp reaction expressed by rulers of Pakistan against India regarding developments in Kashmir is largely due to the pressure of anger among people of Pakistan, particularly the people of POK. However, it is circumscribed by the compulsions of a regime subservient to imperialism. It betrays dependence on US imperialism for protection, arms and aid in a highly precarious state of economy. Moreover, it remains within the frame of division of Kashmir between Pakistan and India, regardless of the deceptive claims of support for the right to self-determination.

Meanwhile, welcome signs are coming from Pakistan occupied Kashmir with people protesting and raising slogans for independence of Kashmir from both the countries.

The so-called international community, which actually means imperialists and their compradors, remains within the confines of advising both the countries for restraint and expressing shallow concern for human rights in a passing manner. The moves of US imperialists are in line with their designs for using the services of the rulers of both the countries for their interests in South Asia particularly Afghanistan. Russian imperialists and China have also reacted in frame of their own designs for hegemony in the region rather than any concern for rights of people in Jammu and Kashmir.

(The issue is to be addressed further in a separate writing.)

The Modian Camouflage

Along with its drastic steps to control and crush the will of people in Kashmir the regime in New Delhi is using the signboard of development to penetrate peoples' will. Its claims to 'smash' the 'barrier' of article 370 for the export of 'development' into Kashmir reminds the misdeeds of its cunning British colonial ancestors who are infamous for enslaving India in the name of exporting civilization as part of the "white man's burden."

Article 370 divides the jurisdiction to make laws between the state of Kashmir and the union of India. How **the very power to make and amend laws**, for the benefit of its people, in the hands of the legislature of the state, instead of the parliament of the union, in itself block the way of welfare and development of people in Kashmir? How the placing of that power into the hands of the Indian parliament is **by nature** beneficial for the welfare and development?

Such a loud talk of development reminds the Nehruvian "food and salt" policy emphasised by Indira Gandhi as the reliable tool to purchase the will of people in Kashmir who

according to Nehru were vulnerable to purchase of their will because of their being "soft and addicted to easy life." Interestingly, there is an element of replacement of Nehruvian camouflage with Modian camouflage. The logic is that the article 370 and article 35A deserve to be thrown away, because, for the economy of Kashmir these were the suicidal gifts of now infamous protectionism. These were offered in platter to Kashmir by the naive Indian rulers of the time. In present era of globalization Kashmir must now get rid of these items of self-deception. A Kashmir with barriers is not compatible with an India with doors wide open for multinationals.

The Modian camouflage has its other aspects too. For example there is much show of concern regarding Kashmiri women's right to property. The more hawkish among BJP have made it amply clear that such a talk of right to property for them is the very part of their conception of right over women of Kashmir as their own property. Moreover everybody knows about the heinous record of actual protection of women's rights through Indian laws and judicial system. Similarly claims about protection of rights of dalits including right to reservation through implementation of central laws should be viewed in light of the so glaring glimpses of anger among dalits in India against heart rending atrocities and the heinous record of laws and judiciary regarding their protection.

Demarcate with All Varieties of National Chauvinism

In its euphoric propaganda against article 370, Modi regime says that it has provided breeding ground for and encouraged "separatism" and "terrorism". The allegation of separatism against people of Kashmir is a cover to conceal the annexationist policy of Indian rulers towards Kashmir. Parts

of Kashmir had been grabbed by India as well as Pakistan through deceit and aggression. The breaking of commitments by the Indian rulers about the right of the Kashmiri people for the exercise of their free will does not make the people of Kashmir separatists. It only exposes the Indian rulers as occupiers. The so-called terrorism in Kashmir is not a product of article 370. On the contrary, it is a product of the mass upsurge against the denial and suppression of right to self-determination for the people of Kashmir. The erosion of article 370 has its own share in converting the valley into the hotbed of that upsurge.

The present moves of the BJP regime against people of Kashmir contain its general as well as specific designs. The general here means the common design of the Indian state in crushing the will of the people of Kashmir. It is in response to a situation which is the cause of worry for the entire ruling class camp and its state. The specific means the design to serve and consolidate the interests of the ruling class faction allied with BJP camp. It includes aspects like changing the demography in J&K as well as consolidating the earlier gains of communal chauvinism and jingoism within the country for the particular benefit of BJP-RSS camp at the cost of its rivals. Revolutionary forces must target against both aspects. But the due appreciation of the latter must not lead to search for allies from among ruling classes in the name of resisting "Hindutava fascism" even on Kashmir issue. The task of solidarity with people of Kashmir in particular demands demarcation with all varieties of national chauvinism as well as the subordination to the reference frame of the Indian constitution.

September 6, 2019

Note: Also see the article "The Pending Political Journey..." in this booklet.

Coffins of False Commitments Sealed Further

The recent moves have further sealed the coffins of false commitments, so loudly made not only with the people of Kashmir but the whole world, by the rulers of India in late forties and early fifties. The world had listened them repeatedly assuring that Indian Constitution will never *enter* Kashmir against the will of its people. Jawahar Lal Nehru, on June 26, 1956 in parliament had said, "We have declared, and even if we have not declared, the fact will remain that it is the people of Kashmir who must decide. And I say with all respect to our constitution that it just does not matter what your constitution says; if the people of Kashmir do not want it, it will not go there."

Nehru had never been genuine in his pledges. It is now an open secret that accession of Kashmir into India was always a must for him ever since he occupied the seat of India's Prime minister. He tried his utmost for accession even before the raid on Kashmir by the Pakistan backed tribes from NWFP which compelled Maharaja Hari Singh for the instrument of temporary accession with India. On Sept 27, 1947, a month before the tribal raid, Nehru wrote to Vallabhbhai Patel "The accession to the Indian Union should take place early" and "there is no other course open to the Maharaja but this." The assertion meant no room for the independent existence of Jammu and Kashmir. Maharaja Hari Singh wanted separate Standstill Agreements as an independent state with both Pakistan as well as India. But Nehru was bent upon converting the Standstill Agreement into a virtual instrument of accession. Indian representative Krishna Manon's speech in United Nations Security Council in 1957 emphasised: "it is

normal to conclude that a standstill agreement would have been concluded and that Standstill Agreement would have included external affairs, control of state forces and other matters which spring from the sovereignty of a country." It meant nothing less than a Standstill Agreement to forfeit the sovereignty of Jammu & Kashmir. The first White Paper of Government of India published in July 1948 also talked about "Standstill Agreement" the acceptance of which was "conditional on accession". It was the reason why India did not sign a Standstill Agreement with Kashmir and hotly pursued for its virtual conversion into an instrument of accession. On the other hand Pakistan had signed the Standstill Agreement with independent Kashmir without making accession a condition. Indian Government had called for some authorised minister from Kashmir to negotiate the issue. Before the design for accession could be realised Kashmir was invaded.

However that development was taken as precious opportunity by New Delhi to further pursue its ulterior designs to grab Kashmir. In given conditions, it had to be addressed with a concealed road map for achieving the final end. Maharaja of Kashmir who had requested India for help in his hour of crisis had to go for instrument of accession with India. Lord Mountbatten, the Governor General of India at that time told that technically India could not come to the defence of Kashmir's independence because it was not an Indian territory. Maharaja Hari Singh who had gone for instrument of accession only for the removal of the technical hurdle, made it clear in Para 7 in the instrument of accession signed by him on October 26, 1947 "Nothing in this Instrument shall be deemed to commit me in any way to acceptance of any future constitution of India". It reflected the pressure of the urge among people of Kashmir to decide their future

independently. In this context the Government of India also had to emphasise the provisional nature of the accession: *"Nevertheless accepting the accession the Government of India made it clear that they would regard it as purely provisional.....The question of accession is to be decided finally in a free plebiscite; on this point there is no dispute."*

Sheikh Abdulla emphasised plebiscite to democratically ascertain the will of the people, instead of any autocratic decision made by a king.

However, Jawahar Lal Nehru left no stone unturned in playing the game of deception. He emphasised that regardless of the instrument of accession, Kashmir virtually remained an independent country for India. For people of Kashmir his pledges meant that Indian Army was in Kashmir only to defend its right to self-determination. Jawahar Lal Nehru on Feb. 15, 1948 even called Kashmir *"the beautiful country"* in his speech delivered at Jammu: "we have not come here to rule; we have been called here by the people and by the National Conference leaders and the Maharaja to save the beautiful country and the people from the invaders; we have not come here as aggressors or to forcibly rule over Kashmir...we are here at Kashmir's request to help the people of Kashmir from the enemy." The speech was quoted in The Times of India Feb. 17, 1948. Deputy Prime Minister Patel fully participated in this Nehruvian course of camouflage. He too said in a public speech in Bombay on October 30, 1948, "We are in Kashmir because the people of Kashmir want us to be there. The moment we realize that the people of Kashmir don't want us to be there, we shall not be there even for a minute." (These days Patel is being projected like a cult figure by the BJP-RSS camp to belittle Nehru in his comparison.)

Gopalaswami Iyyanger who represented India in United Nations Security Council stated in his statement on Feb.6, 1948: "When the emergency has past and normal conditions are restored, she will be free, by means of a plebiscite, either to ratify her accession to India or to change her mind and accede to Pakistan or remain independent. We shall not stand in the way if she elects to change her mind." Even before that M.C. Setalvad member of the Indian delegation to the United Nations Council said more emphatically: "The Indian government was careful... that it was accepting the accession only on the condition that, later when peace had been restored, the expression of the popular will should be ascertained in a proper manner. *It was on that condition and that condition alone, that the Indian Government accepted accession.*"

"Absolutely Dishonest"

These pledges were later shamelessly broken with flimsy excuses. The plebiscite never took place. Sheikh Abdulah was kept behind bars for a long time for raising his voice for plebiscite. Indian rulers declared accession "accepted" by people of Kashmir through the Constituent Assembly of Kashmir which was elected without making accession an issue and was rather supposed to elect the "national government" with responsibility to hold the plebiscite. More over one fourth of the population in POK were not part of the exercise for electing the constituent assembly. The reality of betrayal was so powerful that it even spoke through the words of the ruling class politicians and state representatives. For example, V.P. Manon who had gone to Maharaja Hari Singh as representative of India with the proposal for accession later made the following comment about the experience of treachery of the Indian State saying *"as far plebiscite, we were absolutely, absolutely dishonest."* Jai Prakash Narayan wrote

in his letter to Nehru on May 1, 1956 “from all the information that I have, 95% of Kashmiri Muslims do not wish to be or remain Indian citizens. I doubt therefore the wisdom of trying to keep people by force where they do not wish to stay. This cannot but have serious long term political consequences though immediately it may suit policy and please public opinion.” On June 23, 1966 he said in his letter to Indira Gandhi, ***“we profess democracy and rule by force in Kashmir.....No matter how much and how loud and how long we doubt that Kashmir is an inalienable part of India and that, therefore, there is no Kashmir problem, the fact remains that a serious and urgent problem faces, and will continue to face us in that part of the country. That problem exists not because Pakistan wants to grab Kashmir, but because there is deep and widespread discontent among the people. The people of India might be kept in the dark about the true state of affairs in the valley, but every chancellery in New Delhi knows the truth, and almost every foreign correspondent.”***

These are the words of a ruling class representative who had been highly eulogised by the BJP leaders as the “Lok-Nayak” before and after emergency. The irony is that he also criticised Nehru on Kashmir issue but from the positions diametrically opposite to the present BJP regime.¹ Anyhow, the Indian state is now facing the “long term political consequences” of its deeds.

¹Jay Parkash Narayan as a representative of ruling classes had his own concerns, underlying his positions on Kashmir. One of his major concerns was that Kashmir issue must not lead to unmanageable contention between India and Pakistan. It was in line with concerns of US imperialists to curtail the influence of China and Soviet Union as part of the design to stall “expansion of communism”.

Revisionists and the Right to Self-Determination

Revisionist parties (which have now become Social-Democrats) always support the Indian rulers' policy against right to self-determination of the people of Kashmir.

- In its 1956 Palakkad Congress, the Communist Party of India took the position, on the question of Kashmir, that the state was a proper part of India; and it was demanded that India and Pakistan should resolve the issue on the basis of the cease-fire line and by making required changes. Not only that, its leaders went on to issue one after another statements, in a rival competition, to prove that how firmly they stood, and others did not, by the above mentioned position.

In a statement by Mr. Biswa Punniya, a Polit-Bureau member of the Marxist party, said, “Left front would be glad if the issue of Kashmir was resolved on the basis of its complete accession with India.....”. Mr. Biswa Punniya further said that it was political dishonesty on part of Mr. Dange who had said that this position of ours favored referendum or we did not consider Kashmir a part of India. (Times of India; April 28, 1964)

- Here is another statement by the then General Secretary of the Marxist party, which was so afraid of being called a pro-China:

Regarding the accusations that the left is supporting the demand to hold a referendum in Kashmir, because China advocates such a step, Mr. Namboodripad said that even then it was his opinion that Kashmir was part of India and that he supported Sheikh Abdulla's arrest in 1953. (Times of India; May 4, 1964)

- Another member of Polit-Bureau of the Marxist party, while clarifying about such accusations levied by the Dange faction, known as the rightist faction in the party, said this:

P. Sundraiya, the leader of the left faction of the communists has repudiated the fact, cooked up by the Dangeites, that the left has rejected Kashmir's accession to India. He said, “I wish to make it clear that none of the left faction has either questioned the accession of Kashmir to India, or asked for referendum to decide about

A Posture of Convenience:

"It is an international problem"!

In his days of camouflage, Nehru had said, "...We must always remember, Kashmir is not a thing to be bandied about between India-Pakistan. It has a soul of its own. It has an individuality of its own. We cannot, much less can Pakistan, play with it as if it were something in the political game between the two countries. Nothing can be done without the goodwill of the people of Kashmir." (Speech in Lok Sabha, 31 March 1955) In those days of camouflage, India avoided to present Kashmir issue as merely an "internal" or "bilateral" issue. Nehru recognised it as an issue involving not only the will of the people in Kashmir but also "the international commitments" of India. On October 31, 1947 he had written to Liaquat Ali, the Prime Minister of Pakistan, "Our assurance that we shall withdraw our troops from Kashmir as soon as peace and order are restored and leave the decision about the future of the State to the people of the State is not merely a pledge to your Government but also to the people of Kashmir and *to the world.*" (White Paper of Indian Government on Kashmir). On August 7, 1952 Nehru said in parliament: "It is an international problem". He rather generalized this criteria by saying it would have been an "international problem" even

Kashmir's future." He said, "We firmly stand by the Palakkad formula." PTI, Times of India; May 20, 1964)

The position which reflects through these statements mentioned above which is true to its content even today shows the hypocrisy of these so-called communist parties. The position lays bare not only their shallow antics of being communists and a pro-people force, but also their servility to the Indian ruling classes as well as the imperialists.

if it were related to "any country other than India". Later, Nehru conveniently trampled upon his commitments. He ruled out plebiscite in 1962: "There is no question of any plebiscite in Kashmir, now or later.....I am sick of the talk about plebiscite, which does not interest anybody." (*Times of India*, 20 July, 1961.) But remained engaged with US and the United Kingdom as they tried to broker a "Kashmir peace plan" in 1962. There was a round of Western mediated talks with Pakistan after Indo-China war in 1962, which collapsed in 1963.

However, even the later posture of Indian rulers to project Kashmir as a mere internal or at the maximum a bilateral issue remains more professed than real. It is a posture of convenience. India has its own record of turning to Imperialist masters begging help in pressurizing Pakistan in favor of their own designs. For example in the early 90's, the congress Government of India with full support of the entire opposition knocked at the doors of so called international community for emergency intervention to block the peaceful mass march by JKLF to cross LOC from the side of Pakistan occupied Kashmir to highlight the same common "Individuality of Kashmir" so loudly emphasised by Nehru in late fifties. The western powers not only pulled the strings in Islamabad to stop the JKLF's mass march across the LOC but also gave a pat on the back to Nawaz Shareef after the unarmed marchers had been shot down by Pakistani security forces. A US State Department Spokesman said: "We are encouraged that the government of Pakistan has taken steps to avoid confrontation along its borders." (Feb. 13, 1992)

(See, *"The Political Price of Suppressing the JKLF's Mass-March" in this booklet*)

The Slow Death of Article 370

Article 370 was a product of the special circumstances of the time in which the Instrument of Accession was signed. The stated purpose of article 370 was to make it possible for the state of J&K to avail the benefits, in matters of defense etc, by being a part (temporary) of India, while ensuring all the benefits of its sovereign past. It was claimed that through this article, the legislative authority of the Indian parliament regarding J&K will be delimited to matters of defense, foreign affairs and communication.

When article 370 was created, only two articles of the Indian Constitution applied in full to J&K. For the other provisions of the Indian Constitution to be applicable to J&K, there was requirement of Presidential orders, with concurrence of the state government for some matters and consultations with the state government in others.

However, shortly after, i.e. in 1954, the rulers of India took to the course of gradually eroding article 370.

In addition to the original Presidential orders, including the Presidential order of 1954, more than 45 such Presidential orders were issued between February 11, 1956 and February 19, 1994 to make various other provisions of the Constitution of India applicable to Jammu and Kashmir. As a result 94 of the 97 subjects in the Union List and 260 of the 395 articles of the Indian Constitution have been extended to the state of J&K. These orders were issued as amendments to the original Presidential order of 1954 or the Constitution (Application to J&K) Order of 1954. Few of these orders, along with the original order of 1954, which depicts the substantial erosion, are enlisted here:

1) On May 14, 1954, the President of India passed the

Constitution (Application to J&K) Order which extended the legislative authority of India in relation to J&K, beyond the original three matters to include all the matters in the Union list. Also, Indian citizenship was extended to the 'permanent residents' of J&K.

The jurisdiction of the Supreme Court of India was extended to the State. The Central Government was given power to declare national emergency in the event of external aggression and with concurrence of the state government in the event of internal disturbances.

Further, the state's custom duties were abolished and its financial relations with the Centre were placed on the same footing as other states.

On the same date the Constitution (Amendment) Act 1954 was issued which abolished section-75 of the Constitution of J&K of 1939. This section provided the Council of Ministers with the final right to interpret the constitution.

2) The 'B' category of states in Article-1 of the Indian Constitution was abolished in 1956 through the Constitution Act 1956 (7th Amendment), and J&K, the only state in B category, was included in the 'A' category of states i.e. the states under direct control of the union and its constitution.

3) Article-312 was amended in 1958 which extended the areas covered under All India Services to J&K.

4) At the time of the government of Mr. Sadiq, Article-249 of the Indian Constitution was made applicable to J&K, which meant the legal right for the Centre to make laws on any of the matters in the State List.

5) On March 30, 1956 various popular and distinct nomenclatures to denote various posts were changed; thus,

“Sadr-e-Riyasat” and “Wazir-e-Azam” were changed into the Governor and the Chief Minister.

6) Under the Shimla Agreement of 1972, J&K was declared an issue of bilateral dispute between India and Pakistan. The ceasefire line of December 17, 1971 was converted into the Line of Control.

7) The Indira-Sheikh accord, signed on May 24, 1975 between Indira Gandhi and Sheikh Abdullah, declared Jammu & Kashmir as “a constituent unit” of India; thus, empowering the Parliament of India to make law on any matter in the name of “unity and integrity of the country” and implement it in J&K.

Above description shows that the special rights given under Article-370 during the initial phase of the accession, held no special weightage as a result of their substantial erosion by the cunningly operating Indian state. Interestingly, the erosion was done under the pretext of internal situation of J&K and threat to India's unity and integrity from the other side of the borders; and all of the main parliamentary parties always supported these steps of erosion. The formal status of the article was kept untouched up-till now, not because of some genuine concerns of the Indian rulers to preserve the cultural-historical identity of the people of Kashmir, but for the sake of other considerations of theirs.

Kashmir Reality: In the Mirror of Nehruvian Camouflage

The following is a part of the introduction by A.G. Noorani to the first volume of his book “The Kashmir Dispute”. (Title changed)

1. The Prime Minister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru's telegram to the Prime Minister of Britain, Clement Attlee, on 25 October 1947, before Kashmir's accession to India, which was repeated to the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Liaquat Ali Khan, on 26 October 1947:

I should like to make it clear that the question of aiding Kashmir in this emergency is not designed in any way to influence the State to accede to India. Our views which we have repeatedly made public is that the question of accession in any disputed territory or State must be decided in accordance with the wishes of the people and we adhere to this view. (*White Paper on Jammu and Kashmir 1948: 46*)

2. Governor-General Mountbatten's letter to the ruler of Jammu and Kashmir, Hari Singh, on 27 October 1947, in reply to his 26 October letter offering Kashmir's accession to India:

in the special circumstances mentioned by your Highness, my Government have decided to accept the accession of Kashmir State to the Dominion of India. Consistently with their policy that, in the case of any State where the issue of the accession has been the *subject of dispute*, the question of accession should be decided in accordance with the wishes of the people of the State, it is my Government's wish that as soon as law and order have been restored in Kashmir and her soil cleared of the invader, the question of the State's accession should be settled by a reference to the people. (Ibid.)

He accepted the appeal for military aid and said:

'action has been taken today to send troops of the Indian Army to Kashmir to help your own forces to defend your territory and to protect the lives, property and honor of your people' (ibid.: 4748). This letter mentions 'action' taken today (27 October). There is some controversy on precisely when the Instrument of Accession was signed and when Indian troops landed in Srinagar. This subject is, however, beyond the purview of this essay.

3. The accession was legally made by the Maharaja of Kashmir, and this step was taken on the advice of Sheikh Abdullah, leader of the All Jammu and Kashmir National conference, the political party commanding the widest popular support in the State. Nevertheless in accepting the accession the Government of India made it clear that they would regard it as *purely provisional* until such time as the will of the people could be ascertained. (Ibid., Part I: 3)

4. This formulation was repeated in the same document, with yet greater emphasis in Part IV defining 'India's Objectives'. It said:

In Kashmir as in other similar cases, the view of the Government of India has been that in the matter of disputed accession the will of the people must prevail. It was for this reason that they accepted *only on a provisional basis* the offer of the ruler to accede to India, backed though it was by the most important political organization in the State. The question of accession is to be *decided finally* in a free plebiscite; on this point there is no dispute. It is, however, impossible to hold a plebiscite so long as the State is infested by freebooters from outside. The only purpose for which the Indian troops are operating in Kashmir is to ensure that the vote of the people will not be subject to coercion by tribesmen and others from

across the border who have no right to be in Kashmir. (Ibid., Part IV: 45).

5. Nehru's telegram to Liaquat Ali Khan, on 28 October 1947:

In regard to accession also it has been made clear that this is subject to reference to people of the State and their decision. Government of India have no desire to impose any decision and will abide by people's wishes. But these cannot be ascertained until peace and law and order prevail. (Ibid.: 45)

6. Nehru's telegram to Liaquat Ali Khan on the same day, 28 October 1947: 'I earnestly hope that there will be cooperation between Pakistan and India in stopping raids and putting down disorder and then leaving choice about future to people of Kashmir' (ibid.: 48).

7. Statement issued by Government of India on 30 October 1947: 'It is desirable to draw attention to the *conditions* on which the Government of India have accepted Kashmir's accession.' It proceeded to mention that 'the people of the State should *decide* the question of accession' (*The Times of India*, 31 October 1947).

8. Nehru's telegram to Liaquat Ali Khan on 31 October 1947:

Kashmir's accession to India was accepted by us at the request of Maharaja's Government and the most numerous representative popular organization in the State which is predominantly Muslim. Even then it was accepted *on the condition* that as soon as the invader has been driven from Kashmir soil, and law and order restored, the people of Kashmir would decide the question of accession. It is upon them to accede to either Dominion then. (*White Paper on Jammu and Kashmir* 1948: 51)

Further:

Our assurance that we shall withdraw our troops from Kashmir as soon as peace and order are restored and leave the decision about the future of the State to the people of the State is not merely a pledge to your Government but also to the people of Kashmir *and to the world*. (Ibid.: 51, paragraphs 5 and 7)

9. Nehru's broadcast to the nation on 2 November 1947:

We decided to accept this accession and to send troops by air, but we made a *condition* that accession would have to be *considered by the people of Kashmir* later when peace and order established. We were anxious not to finalize anything in a moment of crisis, and without the fullest opportunity to the people of Kashmir to have their say: *it was for them ultimately to decide*.

Let me make it clear that it has been our policy all along that where there is a dispute about the accession of a state to either Dominion, the decision must be made by the people of the state. It was in accordance with this policy that we *added a proviso to the Instrument of Accession of Kashmir*. . . We have declared that the fate of Kashmir has ultimately to be decided by the people. That pledge we have given, and the Maharaja had supported it, not only to the people of Kashmir *but to the world*. We will not, and cannot, back out of it. We are prepared, when peace and law and order have been established, to have a referendum held under international auspices like the UN. We want to be a fair and just reference to the people, and we shall accept their verdict. (Ibid.: 53 and 55; emphases added)

The next day, on 3 November, Nehru drew Liaquat Ali Khan's attention to his broadcast:

I wish to draw your attention to the broadcast on Kashmir which I made last evening. I have stated our Government's

policy and made it clear that we have no desire to impose our will on Kashmir but to leave final decision to people of Kashmir. I further stated that we have agreed on impartial international agency like UN supervising any referendum. (Ibid.)

10. Nehru's telegram to Liaquat Ali Khan on 21 November 1947:

I have repeatedly stated that as soon as the raiders have been driven out of Kashmir or have withdrawn and peace and order have been established, the people of Kashmir should decide the question of accession by plebiscite or referendum under international auspices such as those of the United Nations. (Ibid.: 67)

11. Nehru's statement on Kashmir in the Constituent Assembly (Legislative) on 25 November 1947: 'Kashmir and India have been bound together in many ways from ages past. These last *few weeks* have forged *a new link which none can surrender*' (ibid.: 71). An ominous declaration.

12. India's complaint to the UN Security Council on 31 December 1947:

But in order to avoid any possible suggestion that India had taken advantage of the state's immediate peril for her own political advantage, the Dominion Government made it clear that once the soil of the state had been cleared of the invader and normal conditions were restored, the people would be free to decide their future by the recognized democratic method of plebiscite or referendum, which, in order to ensure complete impartiality, may be held under international auspices. (Ibid.: 77, paragraph 6).

The complaint was made under Article 35 of the UN Charter in

Chapter VI.

13. India's delegation to the United Nations Security Council, N. Gopalaswamy Ayyangar's opening speech on 15 January 1948:

The question of the future status of Kashmir vis-à-vis her neighbours and the world at large, and a further question, namely, whether she should withdraw from her accession to India, and either accede to Pakistan or *remain independent, with a right claim admission as a Member of the UN* – all this we have recognized to be a matter for unfettered decision by the people of Kashmir, after normal life is restored to them. (227th Meeting, UN Security Council 1948: 32)

14. Gopalaswamy Ayyangar's statement at the United Nations Security Council on 3 February 1948:

Before I proceed I might say that, apart from the stoppage of fighting, the *two parties interested in the Jammu and Kashmir question* each for its own reason are the insurgents, who want responsible government, and Pakistan, which wants the question of accession to be finally settled. As far as the insurgents are concerned. I have indicated what the Maharaja is prepared to have announced in his name as his decision. As the Security Council is aware, the Government of India is fully committed to the view that, after peace is restored and all people belonging to the state have returned there, a free plebiscite should be taken and the people should decide whether they wish to remain with India, to go over to Pakistan or to *remain independent*, if they choose to do so. (239th Meeting, UN Security Council 1948: 302)

15. Gopalaswamy Ayyangar's statement at the United Nations Security Council on 6 February 1948:

We accepted Kashmir's offer of accession at a time when she was in peril, in order to be able to effectively to save her from extinction. We will not, in the circumstances, hold her to this accession *as an unalterable decision on her part*. When the emergency has passed and normal conditions are restored, she will be free, by means of a plebiscite, either to ratify her accession to India or to change her mind and accede to Pakistan or *remain independent*. We shall not stand in the way if she elects to change her mind. That, I think, is the proper description of India's attitude. (242nd meeting, UN Security Council 1948: 37)

16. M.C. Setalvad, member of the Indian delegation to the United Nations Security Council, said on 23 January 1948:

But I make bold to say that the conduct of my Government has been entirely above board in this matter. It was not until the Ruler of Kashmir and the popular leader of Kashmir approached the Indian Government for assistance in the extremity which I have described, that the Indian Government stated – and, I submit, rightly stated – that it could not interfere in the matter of Kashmir unless the State was a part of Indian territory, which could come about only if Kashmir acceded to the Indian Union. On that understanding, in the peril in which it found itself, Kashmir offered to accede to the Indian Union – not only the ruler but also the popular leader. The Indian Government was careful, even though the request came from both, *to stipulate* that it was accepting the accession *only on the condition* that later, when peace had been restored, the expression of the popular should be ascertained in a proper manner. *It was on that condition, and that condition alone, that the Indian Government accepted accession*. (234th Meeting, UN Security Council 1948: 208)

17. Nehru's speech at Jammu on 15 February 1948:

We have not come here to rule; we have been called here by the people and by the National Conference leaders and the Maharaja to save the beautiful country and the people from the invaders; we have not come here as aggressors or to forcibly rule over Kashmir. . . . We are here at Kashmir's request to help the people of Kashmir from the enemy. (*The Times of India*, 17 February 1948).

18. Nehru's speech in the Constituent Assembly
(Legislative) on 5 March 1948:

Even at the moment of accession, we went out of our way to make a unilateral declaration that we would abide by the will of the people of Kashmir as declared in a plebiscite or referendum. We insisted further that the Government of Kashmir must immediately become a popular Government. We have adhered to that position throughout and we are prepared to have a plebiscite, with every protection for fair voting, and to abide by the decision of the people of Kashmir. (*Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, Vol. 5: 249)

19. Deputy Prime Minister Vallabhbhai Patel's speech at a public meeting in Bombay on 30 October 1948:

Some people consider that a Muslim majority area must necessarily belong to Pakistan. They wonder why we are in Kashmir. The answer is plain and simple. We are in Kashmir because the people of Kashmir want us to be there. The moment we realize that the people of Kashmir do not want us to be there, we shall not be there even for a minute. . . . We are asked why we are in Kashmir. The reply is clear. If the Muslims in Kashmir tell us to go away, we will get out. We shall not let the Kashmiris down. (*The Hindustan Times*, 31 October 1948)

20. Resolution of the UN Commission for India and Pakistan, dated 5 January 1949, which both sides accepted: 'The

question of the accession of the State of Jammu and Kashmir to India or Pakistan will be decided through the democratic method of a free and impartial plebiscite' (UN Security Council 1949: 23–25).

21. Sir B.N. Rau's speech in the United Nations Security Council on 7 February 1951: 'Kashmir has the right of representation [in India's Constituent Assembly] ever since April 1947; it acceded *tentatively* in October 1947' (463rd Meeting, UN Security Council 1951: 21). Here Rau's use of the word 'tentatively' is significant and must be noted. He was a judge of the Calcutta High Court, Constitutional Adviser to the Constituent Assembly of India, and judge of the International Court of Justice.

22. Nehru's speech at a public meeting in Srinagar on 4 June 1951:

First of all, I would like to remind you of the fateful days of 1947 when I came to Srinagar and gave the solemn assurance that the people of India would stand by Kashmir in her struggle. On that assurance, I shook Sheikh Abdullah's hand before the vast multitude that had gathered there. I want to repeat that the Government of India will stand by that pledge, whatever happens. That pledge itself stated that it is for the people of Kashmir to decide their fate without external interference. That assurance also remains and will continue. Indian troops came to Kashmir in the hour of great peril at the invitation of the constitutional authorities of the state as well as representatives of the people. They will not remain here a single day if they are unwanted for the purpose for which they came or if the people of Kashmir feel that they do not desire them any longer here. (*The Hindu*, 5 June 1951)

23. Nehru's speech at Calcutta on 1 January 1952:

He [Syama Prasad Mookerjee] wants to know what we are going to do about the one-third of Kashmir which is under Pakistani control. Let me explain first of all, Kashmir is not the property of either Pakistan or India. Kashmir belongs to its people. The people of Kashmir have acceded to India of their own free will and we accepted gladly. Even then we have made it clear that once the war was over, we would hold a plebiscite to allow the people of Kashmir the right to express their views about the accession. If then, the people of Kashmir tell us to get out, we will do so. We will not stay there by force. We did not conquer the territory . . .

There is no doubt about it that he is the leader of the people of Kashmir, a very great leader. If tomorrow Sheikh Abdullah wanted Kashmir to join Pakistan, neither I nor all the forces of India would be able to stop it because if the leader decides, it will happen. . . . Since the matter has been referred to the UN, *we have given our word of honour that we shall abide by their decision*. India's pledge is no small matter and we shall stick by it in the eyes of the world. (Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru, Vol. 17: 76-78).

24. Nehru in Parliament on 26 June 1952:

And I say with all respect to our Constitution that it just does not matter what your Constitution says, if the people of Kashmir do not want it, it will not go there. . . . Let us suppose there was a proper plebiscite there – and the people of Kashmir said, 'We do not want to be with India', well we are committed to it, we would accept it. It might pain us but we would not send an Army against them; we might accept that, however much hurt we might feel . . . and we would change our constitution about it. (Ibid., Vol. 18: 418)

25. Nehru in Parliament on 7 August 1952:

So, while the accession was complete in law and in fact, the other fact, which has nothing to do with law, also remains, namely our pledge to the people of Kashmir, if you like, to the people of the world, that this matter can be reaffirmed or cancelled or cut out by the people of Kashmir, if they so wish.

We do not want to win people against their will and with the help of armed forces, and if the people of Jammu and Kashmir state so wish it, to part company from us, they can go their way and we shall go our way. We want no forced marriages, no forced unions like this. I hope this great Republic of India is a free, voluntary, friendly and affectionate union of the States of India . . . *Ultimately – I say with all deference to this Parliament – the decision will be made in the hearts and minds of the men and women of Kashmir, neither in this Parliament, nor in the United Nations, nor by anybody else.* (Ibid., Vol. 18: 29396)

26. Even after Sheikh Abdullah was dismissed from the office of Prime Minister of Kashmir and arrested on 9 August 1953, Nehru said on 15 August 1953:

I want to repeat: it was not today but five and a half years ago that we gave a pledge that only the people of Kashmir can decide their future, we said this and later repeated it. Today also it is our firm opinion that the Kashmir issue can ultimately be decided only by the people of Kashmir. This issue cannot be settled by force. (*The Statesman*, 16 August 1953)

27. Indo-Pak Prime Ministers' Joint Communique issued at New Delhi on 21 August 1953:

Kashmir dispute was especially discussed at some length. It was 'their firm opinion that this should be settled in accordance with the wishes of the people of the State, with a view to promoting their well-being and causing the least disturbance to

the life of the people of the State. The most feasible method of ascertaining the wishes of the people was by fair and impartial plebiscite. Such a plebiscite had been proposed and agreed to some years ago. Progress, however, could not be made because of the lack of agreement in regard to certain preliminary issues.

It was even decided that 'the Plebiscite Administrator should be appointed by the end of April 1954'. However, following all these claims and assurances, Nehru soon changed tack.

28. Nehru, on 19 July 1961: 'There is no question of any plebiscite in Kashmir, now or later. . . I am sick of the talk about plebiscite, which does not interest anybody' (*Times of India*, 20 July 1961).

***From Self-Determination to
the Distinct Goal of National Liberation
The Pending Political Journey
of Kashmir Movement***

The Kashmir valley is again “on the boil”. After unprovoked and planned murder of Hizbul Mujahidin commander Burhan Muzaffar Wani, by the state terrorist forces on July 8, the spontaneous waves of anger and grief have spread far and wide across the valley. Media observers call it a replay, with an unparalleled ferocity of the mass fury faced by the Indian state in 2008 and 2010. People continue to defy curfews and brave bullets as they did in 2008 and 2010, but the scale and intensity of present mass outrage is comparable only with the mass anger expressed in turmoil of late eighties and early nineties. The wave of street 'intifadas' has, this time, directed itself to target anything symbolizing “India”. BJP offices, a PDP legislature's house, CRPF posts, police stations, army bunkers and government vehicles have been set ablaze. Even an attempt was made to storm major IAF base. Houses belonging to pro-India parties came under attack. Many villages saw intense protests including an attack on a Special Operation Group (SOG) camp of the Jammu & Kashmir Police.

According to a Frontline report, “The protests were so fiery that even police men who were considered “motivated” and “well-trained” in counter-insurgency had to desert the camps ... these were subsequently razed to the ground by mobs. When a bulldozer was brought in to bring down the camp in Rahmo, the protesters stopped it: they wanted to dismantle it brick by brick with their own hands. There was the

same kind of anger in Hassanpora in Bijbehara.”

Union home minister Rajnath Singh reported that in first sixteen days of turmoil 2228 state police personnel, 1100 Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) personnel and 2259 civilians had been injured. Later the figure of injured security persons, in union ministry reports rose to 4500. The protesters are injured mostly with bullets above the waist. The security forces freely used Israeli-style cartridges called pellets. These are loaded with some five hundred iron-balls. The number of youth admitted with pellet injuries is reported to be in hundreds. Most of them are likely to go blind fully or partially. The rising death toll of civilian protesters has already touched 70 within one and a half month of the agitation. The suppression of media touched new heights with the ban on communication lines, internet services, social media and news paper publications leading to an embarrassing and pitiable situation of political defense for Mehbooba Mufti.

The might of state armed forces including paramilitary forces remains unable to 'control' the mass fury of the unarmed people who use stones, now popular as “weapon of the unarmed”. As a special step after seven weeks of the turmoil, 26 battalions of border security force, with sophisticated military weapons, have joined the 'national battle' against unarmed masses including determined contingents of women and pre-teen street fighters, unarmed or stone-armed, as someone may prefer to call.

The reality about the content of the “Kashmir Problem”, as it is called in ruling class language, has come to light with striking clarity in recent decades. The dense flashes of Kashmir phenomenon as a seething cauldron of anger and revolt have repeatedly exposed the crucially depleted political

capital and tyrannical face of the Indian autocratic state. As a part of this process, the latest round of turmoil is marked with added political dimensions and implications. It is now being mentioned as *“incipient revolt”*, *“virtual revolt”*, and even *“a revolt”*, by Indian media observers. Some headlines in Indian media serve as flashlights on the content as well as the intensity of the popular feeling in Kashmir. They now point to the Kashmir spectrum as *“Street side Plebiscite”*, *“And the streets speak freedom”*, *“Wrath of Kashmir”*, *“It has never happened before”* *“It is a revolt”* *“A rebellion goes viral”* so on and so forth. The following piece of dialogue from the press under the title *“Bullets can't stop us”* highlights the spirit of young minds in Kashmir:

“We have the capacity to make them surrender”, said the 20-year-old boy, Atif Ahmed, in Rahmo, pointing towards a deserted and damaged SOG camp. “Can they come back? No, over our dead bodies.” His eyes filled up with anger as he said: “Do you think we are making sacrifices just for fun? No, it is for azadi, and India will have to respond to this. No Omar, no Mehbooba, no Azad can stop us by firing bullets on us, write this if you have the courage.” His friend Muneer added: “We are not anti-India, but we hate India for not listening to us and killing us.”

“This is the refrain from all other parts of Kashmir where the government forces are struggling to restore peace.” (Frontline - August 19, 2016)

The heroic high tide of mass anger and the glorious collective spirit of sacrifice demonstrated by the people of Kashmir are throwing light on its real source of origin. The turmoil is revealing the widespread unflinching urge for “Azadi” as well as the utter hatred for Indian “occupation” at

the root of Kashmir movement. The echo of these essential vibrations of the Kashmiri nationality's heart throb is now too powerful to be simply dismissed as 'creation of Pakistan'. Rather, the shock waves of intense mass fury in Kashmir have now caused a dent in ruling class political consensus on the placing and projection of Pakistan factor regarding present Kashmir turmoil. In spite of its common thread of Indian chauvinism, the ruling class response to Kashmir developments betrays cracks and the element of mutual blame game. Due to this factor the ruling class propaganda offensive against Kashmir movement within the frame of common so called national interest has got diffused to an extent. The "failure" in "political solution" to "Kashmir Problem" is now a theme of controversy among ruling class political quarters. Thus, the political strength of Kashmir struggle is being reflected as a reduction of political space for ruling classes in matter of concealing the Kashmir reality from Indian masses. It is yet to be reflected positively in sufficient expression of solidarity from Indian masses.

In recent decades the alienation of Kashmiri people from Indian state has further grown. The new generation born after 1990 is completely alienated. They see the Indian state only through "the barrel of the gun", in words of media. An extensive travel by media persons, in affected areas, mentioned as "resembling battle fields", has lead to the conclusion that such a level of unrest cannot be "Pakistan sponsored". It is beyond doubt that the chain of unarmed mass pouring of people's wrath, yet remains the major form to strike against the mighty "occupation" forces of Indian state. It is the immediate major channel to express the urge for freedom of Kashmir. It is also the essential source-base for recruitment

and replenishment of armed groups, fundamentalist or secular nationalist. The presence of armed groups in India-controlled part of Kashmir is now recognized in Indian media as "local" phenomena instead of the export-product of terrorism smuggled from the cross border "enemy" soil.

The recent phase of self-delusion of Indian rulers regarding hardly managed peace in Kashmir has come to an end. It is the logical fate of any temporary round of unjust peace maintained through might of state terrorism. It is the very use of terrorist rod of unjust peace by the Indian state which is now taking its toll. The murder of Burhan Wani became a trigger for explosion of latent accumulated wrath against state terrorism. The murder was pre-planned at highest levels. It was presented as a catch prize item of state terrorism at display. However, the concrete execution of this specific murder plan and the pattern of its announcement betrayed the bearing of a general policy decision regarding reservation of material incentives for encouraging security forces to operate **only as killers**. The decision had scrapped the earlier provision of bounty for arresting militants. According to the new provision the prize is reserved only for those who kill a militant. This **no killing no prize policy** has led to **commit and claim murder competitions** in security personnel. It was bound to further accumulate the hatred and resentment against the state, as a consequence. Such an accumulated wrath of Kashmiri nationalism has got further intensified due to element of reaction to the recently raised pitch of Hindutava brand of Indian chauvinism and its expression on fascist lines. The plans for setting up sainik colonies and, separate townships for Kashmiri Pandits increased the threat perception about change of demography and the

consequences.

On the other side, the response of Modi government has vindicated the real content of Kashmir issue, with the same starkness, from opposite side. It is loud and clear in its message that there will be no compromise on “unity and integrity of India”, that nothing beyond the “constitutional framework” is negotiable and “there can be no compromise on national security”. That is how the autocratic thrust of “Indian democracy” is being displayed. A central minister has even gone further to call for converting the cross border part of Kashmir into the “tricoloured flag” territory.

So, the condition of Indian rulers for “peace” with Kashmir is to bow down to the roller of Indian autocracy and to surrender the right to self determination. For them any refusal to such surrender is Pakistan sponsored. Any so called national political initiatives or negotiations within this frame are, as in the past, bound to fail in putting an end to the just fury of Kashmiri nationalism.

The largely unarmed turmoil in Kashmir is not non-violent by nature because it is exercising the right to strike for making a dent in the unjust imposed peace and turns to pitched battles in streets. However, the use of state violence to deal with this turmoil is highly out of proportion. Firings and killings are not being used as a last resort. These are being preferred not only as an easier option to suppress the highly determined unarmed/stone-armed masses, but more than that, as a terrifying display of mighty state power. The state behavior has demonstrated utter disregard for the civilian life in Kashmir. The tendency to kill has a backing of Armed Forces Special Power Act which removes all accountability for such killings. The rulers are not apologetic for the loss of

life and blood. The RSS ideologue Ram Madhav has declared in his tweet that the government would “stand firm” on its course to crush the challenge. The rulers continue to use the Pellet guns and refuse to rule out their use even in future. It reveals the reality of panic stricken mind of the rulers and the tyrannical face of Indian state at the same time.

The ruling class opposition is criticising BJP government for responding to Kashmir situation as a mere law and order problem and a mere creation of Pakistan. They also criticise it for dismissing or undermining the aspect of “political solution” to Kashmir issue. There is talk of restricting the operation of AFSPA, a return to the dustbin of past recommendations of interlocutors, bringing past “autonomy” proposals and promises out of dust for revival, reach out to all forces in Kashmir including “separatists”, return of some flesh to Skelton of section 370, an all party delegation to Kashmir; so on and so forth. In a nutshell these proposals seek to float a semblance of a frame for “political solution” to Kashmir issue within so called national consensus among Indian ruling classes. But the hollowness of this professed concern for a “political solution” comes to light strikingly when it is observed that the proposals are actually for a “political solution” sans recognition of Kashmiri people's right to self determination.

Such an overall state of poverty regarding political offers is major expression of depleted political capital of Indian state in relation to Kashmir issue. The repetition of hollow phrases like “Insaaniyat, Jamhooriat and Kashmiriat” or “mamta and ekta” is a poor concealment to this political poverty. The display of recently opened mouth of Indian state coffers in the name of employment and development in Kashmir also can

not compensate this political dearth. It is a fresh trial to the same old "food and salt" formula shamelessly pleaded by Indira Gandhi and Nehru in late forties in her observations about Kashmir. The difference is that the level of hatred in Kashmir against any attempt at purchasing its dignity by making clever use of economic sufferings is now much higher. It has come to light in most clear terms even in present turmoil.

Even the attempt at making a semblance of political offensive against Pakistan has betrayed the political bankruptcy of the rulers of both the states. The Kashmir-Baluchistan blame game competition has further exposed their true face on so called principal of "unity and integrity" of a country. "Pakistan has no right to do with Baluchistan and Makbooza Kashmir which India has every right to do with Kashmir" is their bankrupt logic of convenience. Because of the high level of tempos of defiant nationalities in both the countries, the common thread of tyranny and national oppression in behavior of both the states is now coming to sharper light, making it easier for the people on both the sides to recognize them as common enemies.

The other sign of depleted political capital is expressed in crises of usable local stooges to reduce alienation through maintaining semblance of "Kashmir government" in the state. Even the seemingly high sounding past resolutions of Kashmir assembly for restoration of situation as in early fifties could not help saving the credibility of any section of ruling class political leadership from Kashmir. It is because of two reasons. One is the tight political grip of Kashmiri masses on the demand for an end to accession which remains the testing device to verify the Kashmir DNA in any political blood. The other is utter compulsion to gear and steer the bulldozers of

tyrannical state power more and more directly from the centre in order to match the mounting wrath of the defiant nationality. The price is exposure of sidelined local leaderships as stooges of Indian state and loss of their use value as an inevitable consequence.

Another dimension of the crisis is that the search for compromisers from within the Kashmir movement, with a capacity to prevail, also remains a very hard job in view of the intensified urge for freedom and raised level of vigilance of people of Kashmir. By taming and converting Sheikh Abdulla into a stooge long ago, the Indian state had imposed a vacuum of leadership on the Kashmir movement.¹ The Kashmir movement could not be able to fully fill this vacuum. The other aspect of the same is that there is no other Sheikh Abdulla to be aimed at and tried as a converted instrument of respite from the wrath of Kashmiri People.

It does not mean that any zigzags and lull-storm cycles for Kashmir movement are now ruled out. What is significant is that the political management of the crisis is going to be more and more consuming and exhaustive with lesser and quickly fading returns.

The Kashmir movement yet retains its overall spontaneous character and faces a crisis of credible leadership. Even then it has displayed strong elements of consciousness regarding significance of its collective striking power and its target. It has also reflected an element of critical watch and response regarding the advice and steps of any leadership. The dismissal of Geelani's advice for restraint is an example. The

¹Sheikh Abdullah's vision of "independent Kashmir" was also within the frame of world imperialist order. But he was a leader with political weight who retained an influence on Kashmiri people for a long time.

positive aspect of spontaneous mass character is its power to ultimately prevail upon the Indian ruling class search for vacillating and compromising elements.

The ongoing turmoil is peculiar because of the juncture of its eruption. Now the alienation of Kashmiri nationality is at an advanced stage. It has completed another round of experience regarding local political stooges of Indian state with Mehbooba as another dummy head of the state after Omar Abdulla. The Kashmiri people are now in a better position to judge, on the basis of experience, the actual relationship of various Indian and international forces with Kashmir movement. The experience of post eighty decades has exposed US imperialism and Pakistani rulers as foes of Kashmir movement. The US imperialism included Kashmir movement in targets of its global "war on terror". The soil of Kashmir demonstrated repeated glimpses of anger against US wars of aggression and the associated crimes. They expressed a feeling of common cause with world forces of resistance against designs of this super monster and its regional bullies like Israel. This positive development has relieved the Kashmir movement to much extent from the burden of confronting the penetration of US imperialism.

In 1992 the Kashmiri nationality, on both sides of the border, experienced true face of Pakistani rulers who did not hesitate even to sprinkle bullets and take lives of Kashmiri people who were marching to cross Indian border as a token of resolve to ultimately realise the dream of united, integrated and independent Kashmir. Then in 2008 they went to the extent of declaring the militants in Indian Kashmir as terrorists. Such demonstrations of hostility have taken their toll by eroding the capacity of Pakistani rulers to hijack or use

the Kashmir movement. In 2007, a section of Hurriyat leaders had to face a strike in the valley in protest against their cross border visit for a dialogue with Pakistani rulers. It is in context of such background that the recent deceptive show of concern by Pakistani rulers for Kashmiri people's right to self determination is not received with expected enthusiasm in Indian Kashmir. The content of their treacherous position had been already revealed as "right to self determination" sans independence. Because of their very placing in present global context of imperialist strategy, they can only seek some favorable settlement with India regarding ultimate division of Kashmir. They are neither for unity of Kashmir nor for independence of any of its parts. So, they have now a much reduced margin and scope to fish in troubled waters of Indian Kashmir.

The Islamic fundamentalist forces in Kashmir are yet in the process of coming out of the shock of this development. The development remains a source of confusion and bewilderment for them. Pakistan no longer remained a promised Islamic dreamland for Kashmiri Muslims in spite of utter hatred for Indian state. Devoid of assured backing from Pakistani state, the Islamic fundamentalist forces are particularly facing a state of flux in mapping their course. Their down tone expressions in the midst of present turmoil might have some relation with this state of flux.

The echo of nationality sentiment, with whatever clouding, remains a counterweight to the rise of Islamic fundamentalist trend in complicated scenario of Kashmir movement. Media quarters now state the "ground realities" as "have gone beyond" manipulation by Pakistan. They say it "political radicalization not necessarily on the basis of

religion”.

At the same time it remains a counterweight also to the vacillations of the secular nationalist, but essentially reformist, Kashmiri leadership. This leadership is still in a process of digesting the loss of 'support' from its cherished “international community” (essentially US Imperialism). It is a reason for its occasional turning towards false hopes of a “political solution” from Indian or Pakistani rulers. Hoping against hope, it now looks for sympathy to quarters even like Dalai-Lama, misconceived as co-sufferer of similar national oppression. It is in spite of the fact that Dalai-lama enjoys shelter of the tyrannical Indian state and backing of the US imperialist masters, the proven enemies of Kashmiri people.

So, an overall state of flux continues regarding emergence of a stable leadership to advance the Kashmir movement on a definite and sure track to self determination and liberation. The problem is rooted in spontaneity of the movement which lacks the matching political orientation. The vague notion of independence leaves much ground for confusion in recognizing the friends and foes. The question of independence for Kashmiri nationality is essentially a question of coming out of the neo-colonial grip of imperialist domination and oppression. It is the content of the national liberation. The present Indian as well as Pakistani states act as tools of this domination and oppression. This imperialist domination, with feudalism as its social prop, oppresses the people of all nationalities in India as well as in Pakistan. Both the states are 'national' pillars of world imperialist order and are targets of the struggle for liberation by people of all the nationalities in these countries.

It is significant for Kashmiri people to recognize that the

demand for right to self determination, in spite of being a just and very significant democratic demand, is not in itself a program of national liberation. Moreover even the content of self determination lies in exercising the right to build a social order of choice. A new democratic social order free from imperialist and feudal oppression is the common choice, determined objectively, for the people of all nationalities in India and Pakistan. Right to self determination including right to secede for all nationalities is one of the essential ingredients of such an order. An echo of such a common cause in self determination struggle can release the untapped energies and provide a new stamina to Kashmiri movement. The present turmoil is reflecting a significant welcome advance in composition of Kashmir movement. It is the transformation of villages into new emerging cradles of striking power of Kashmiri nationality. The above mentioned echo of the cause of national and social liberation can provide a qualitatively new and higher complexion to this welcome phenomenon. It is necessary to pool and direct the common might of Indian people in solidarity with Kashmiri people to strengthen this echo.

From “The Comrade” August, 2016

***The Kashmir Problem:
A Striking Expose of the Fragile Political Base
and Tyrannical Face of the Indian State***

The way Kashmir got transformed so quickly into a seething cauldron of anger and revolt against the Indian regime is a telling commentary on the volatile political situation prevailing in India. The situation is more so in those parts of the country where the general imperialist-feudal oppression acquires an added dimension of a slight towards a national or tribal identity. The Kashmir problem no doubt has its own complexities, historical as well as geo-political: nevertheless, it happens to highlight, in a most clear-cut fashion, the general reality of the Indian autocratic rulers' cynical disregard of the lives and concerns of the broad masses of Indian people, the general reality of their crucially depleted political capital and enhanced administrative ferocity vis-a-vis the common people, and the general reality of the anti-people, anti-national content of their fundamental slogan "unity and integrity of India (i.e. the Indian State) at all costs".

A national problem

These days all the prominent ruling class politicians and other spokesmen can be heard frequently saying that the Kashmir problem is a "national problem". Any person who is somewhat familiar with their political jargon will make no mistake about the meaning of that phrase. The phrase is farthest from acknowledging the truth that the Kashmir problem involves the national factor the issue of the national status, rights, feelings and aspirations of the Kashmiri people. What they mean is that the problem is such as bears upon the interests of the ruling classes as a whole and their State rather

than the interests of a particular section or political party of the ruling classes. Hence the implied suggestion that all of them should forgo, in the specific case, their "democratic right" of mutual leg-pulling and instead bring to bear their concerted power against the incipient threat to their common authority. And that threat, all of them certainly understand, is being posed neither by Pakistan (or any other "foreign hand" bent upon dismembering India) or by the sundry Islamic fundamentalist armed groups, active in Kashmir, but by the defiant Kashmiri people. The systematic calumny, persecution, humiliation, repression and mowing down of Kashmiri people do not take place as a result of some administrative bungling or stray excesses of some police force but as expressions of the considered response of the Indian rulers to the Kashmir problem, on the basis of their threat-perception.

Beat-them-into-submission policy

The present State-terrorist policy of all-out offensive against the masses of Kashmiri people is the culmination of the long-standing State-policy of breaking the resistance of the Kashmiri people to the gradual annexation of Kashmir to the Indian Union through political perfidy, manipulation and the repression of mass protest. As early as in 1953, the Indian State's Kashmir policy had revealed its annexationist thrust and essentially coercive nature when the first and last properly-elected ruler of Kashmir, Sheikh Abdullah, was dismissed and arrested on orders from the Nehru government, and more than 1500 Kashmiris were butchered to quell the widespread mass protest against that high-handed action.

In the past, however, the Indian rulers could always utilize some native political agency for imposing their political will

on the course of events in Kashmir and, thus, maintain a facade of all indigenous leadership being at the helm of Kashmir affairs. Even the dismissal and detention of Sheikh Abdullah was effected under the formal authority of the then "sadr-ryasat" Karan Singh. While the "lion of Kashmir" was forcibly kept out of action for almost two decades, till he was tamed and reinstated in 1975, the show of a Kashmiri government was kept on through front-men such as Bakshi Gulam Mohammed and G. M. Sadiq.

From the mid-eighties onwards, even the worn-out political buffer that the National Conference provided as the ruling party has been subjected to a dismantling operation. As a result, the National Conference today stands disgraced with the Kashmiri public and politically sidelined by Central intervention and, in the meanwhile, no other Kashmiri political platform has been allowed to come up as an alternative parliamentary political force. The Indian rulers' annexationist Kashmir policy has come full circle. Recently, they have dropped the pretence of respecting the special status of Kashmir and sought to lord it over Kashmir like with any other state of the Indian Union (notwithstanding their ritualistic reiteration of article-370 which has systematically been drained of all political content and retains only the legal safeguard against the buying up of Kashmiri landed property by non-Kashmiris). Thus the Indian rulers have confronted the Kashmiri people with the choice of either getting resigned to unqualified subjection to the Indian State or revolting against the encroaching authority of the Indian State. The Kashmiri people have opted for the latter course.

The mass character of the defiance of the authority of the Indian rulers, and the taking to arms by a determined section of

Kashmiri youth who are disillusioned about the farce of Indian parliamentary democracy: these two factors in tandem have lent quite a new complexion to the old Kashmir problem. The former is certainly the basic of these two factors, the prevalent feeling of national disgust and alienation from the Indian State is determining the Kashmiri youth's recourse to arms. On the other hand, the emergence of armed young rebels is playing an important role in galvanizing and strengthening the resolve of the Kashmiri masses to assert their independent national identity vis-a-vis the Indian State. It is this new complexion acquired by the Kashmir problem that has set the alarm-bells ringing in the Indian ruling circles and they have come down heavily upon the Kashmiri people to instill dread of the Indian State-might in the Kashmiri mind.

In the heat of intra-party wrangling, the Union Minister for Railways, George Fernandes, blurted out the truth about the current State-terrorist policy towards Kashmir, "...the administration was of the view that the problem could only be solved by bringing the people into submission". (PTI & UNI, *Indian Express*, May 20, 1990.). How the bloodthirsty beast under the Skin of these Gandhian hypocrites comes out snarling, when the State-authority of the Indian rulers is at stake, can be seen in one of the comments of the Union Minister for External Affairs, I.K. Gujral! In an interview in London, he said with least compunction. "The issue (in Kashmir) is not lives.... The issue is the durability of the Indian State. And the Indian State cannot be allowed to break at any risk." (UNI, *Indian Express*, April 22, 1990.). How brutal and yet enlightening! It is a clear political confession by the Indian rulers that they are concerned neither with the sentiment and security of the Kashmiri people nor with the unity and

integration of the Kashmiri people with the people of the rest of India. What they are solely and terribly concerned with is the securing of Kashmir as their possession "the durability of the Indian State" no matter how many Kashmiri lives and other lives are cut off to get there. At the time of the Jalianwala Bagh massacre, for the British colonialists the issue was not the Indian lives but the durability of the British Raj; for the Indian people, however, those disdainfully-exterminated Indian lives could not but be the issue that pronounced the insufferability of the British Raj. Today, the people of Kashmir are justified in drawing the conclusion that the Indian rulers, who have shown in practice and publicly declared their proclivity to slaughter the Kashmiris, have no right, other than the barbarian right of might, to claim the Kashmiri people as subjects of the Indian State. And those Indians who are not driven to shame and anger and protest by this avowed barbarism of the Indian rulers have no right to claim the Kashmiris as their fellow countrymen and expect from the Kashmiris any reciprocal affinity with them.

Indian Chauvinism to the Rescue of State-Terrorism

The Indian rulers are well aware that, despite their best efforts. State-terrorist atrocities on the ordinary Kashmiri masses could not be kept concealed from the Indian public, unlike the cases of such atrocities on the insurgent nationalities of the remote north-eastern parts of India. They know that knowledge of the ruthlessness and the enormity of State repression would surely give rise to a general feeling of disgust and public outcry against them. So, in order to forestall adverse public reaction, they vociferously played up the Pakistani connection of the Kashmiri turbulence, artificially created an atmosphere of confrontation with Pakistan, and

invoked Indian chauvinism against alleged Pakistani designs of grabbing Kashmir. And they have, by and large, succeeded in distracting the attention of the common people of India from the State atrocities that are being perpetrated on the Kashmiri masses; also, the vital question of the national and democratic rights of the Kashmiri people between the Indian rulers and their Pakistani counterparts. The question of Indo-Pak contention over Kashmir was made the focus of public attention and concern.

Due to the historical circumstance of the carving out of the two States, India and Pakistan, in a maze of civil destruction and man-slaughter, and the subsequent wars that were imposed on the two peoples by their respective rulers, the common man in India takes Pakistan for a relentless and wicked foe of India and vice-versa. Hence, the alleged Pakistani designs against India, or alleged Pakistani connection of any political force or movement in India, usually generate the high-tide of Indian chauvinism, the like of which no other patriotic concern can boast of. Thus, the Indian rulers, through willful branding of the just struggle of the Kashmiri masses as "Pakistan-instigated disturbance" and the armed groups of rebellious Kashmiri youth as "Pakistani agents", have more or less neutralized the intensity of the incipient public reaction against their State-terrorist operations in Kashmir.

Excepting the sort of false legitimization of the reign of terror in Kashmir resting on the perverted logic of Indian chauvinism, the Indian rulers have absolutely no justification for unleashing terror on the Kashmiri people. Given a proper and sustained exposure-campaign by communist revolutionaries, democratic elements and other conscientious

citizens of India against the falsehoods and misdeeds of Indian rulers with respect to the struggling Kashmiri people, the Indian rulers would stand condemned in the eyes of the Indian public, in due course of time.

Kashmir is not an integral part of India

Indian ruling class politicians of all hues seek to falsify history by chanting, day in and day out, that Kashmir is an integral part of India. How and when did Kashmir become an *integral part* of the Indian Union? They have no coherent and common answer to this question. Counting on the common man's non-familiarity with the matter they fly in the face of incontrovertible facts pertaining to the unsettled question of Kashmir's statehood.

The Instrument of Accession (signed by the then rulers of the State of Jammu and Kashmir as a contractual arrangement for enabling the entry of the Indian Union army to check the Pakistan-inspired tribal invasion of Kashmir) was a provisional document. Under its terms, the people of Kashmir reserved their uncurtailed right of determining their statehood, i.e., exercising their option of becoming a constituent part of the State of the Indian Union or a constituent part of the State of Pakistan, or an independent State of Kashmir. The then Indian government repeatedly proclaimed that India would stand by the treaty-obligations and that the people of Kashmir would be given the opportunity to exercise that option, as soon as normal conditions got restored in Kashmir. At a more solemn level, the Indian Constituent Assembly, while providing for Kashmir's autonomous status in the Indian Union under Article 370, reiterated the right of the people of Kashmir to accept or reject that arrangement by their free self-determination. Yet, the people of Kashmir were never given

the opportunity of exercising that option. Now, the Indian rulers cannot justify their reneging from that commitment by pointing to Pakistan's default on that score. The argument, that Pakistan's refusal to vacate the forcible occupation of a part of Kashmir entitles India to hold on to the other part without the express consent of the people of Kashmir, is a sheer bandit-argument. Actually, it is this anti-democratic propensity of the Indian rulers their reliance on force, deception and manipulative politics in dealing with the people of Kashmir; their mistrust of the Kashmiri people, which found expression in the latter being kept out of the top administrative posts; and, in general, their cheating of the Kashmiris even on the initially-promised autonomous status that has smothered the probability of Kashmir becoming an integral part of India.

***People's right to self-determination,
not the integrity of the Indian state, is inviolable***

The right of the Kashmiri people to national self-determination does not merely rest on the historical facts of the case. Even if Kashmir were an integral part of the Indian State, that right would still be intact as a democratic right of the Kashmiri people, like that of other nationalities in India. In the modern world, that is a universally-recognized democratic right of all nations. None can claim to uphold the basic principles of democracy while repudiating the right of nations to self-determination.

The Indian rulers are very fond of referring to all sorts of diversity residing in the composite entity of India, but they invariably stop short of mentioning the national diversity of India. As if their unwillingness to acknowledge the obvious fact of India being a multinational country could do away with the national question in India! Well, their pretensions to

running "the largest democracy in the world" come in the way of formally repudiating the right of nations to self-determination. So, by-passing the national question in India, they seek to dismiss the right of national self-determination by raising the battle-cry against "separatism" and asserting the inviolability of the integrity of the Indian State.

Now, what stuff this integrity of the Indian State is made of the Indian rulers do not tell. The integrity of a democratic State is determined by the *national integrity of its people* which itself is the end-product of *the objective integration of the economic, social and cultural life of the people and the attendant national consciousness and commitment*. Likewise, the integrity of a multinational democratic State is determined by the *voluntary union of the constituent nations or peoples, on the basis of equal status, mutual respect and mutual benefit*. Then, the integrity of a democratic State is regarded as inviolable with reference to outside forces.

Because, any tampering with this integrity by some outside force becomes a violation of the national will of the people or common will of the nations-in-union. On the contrary, the integrity of a colonial State or a feudal State is determined by the sway of the ruler's sword, for it is quite alien to the general democratic rights or the national will of the people concerned. There can be nothing inviolable about the integrity of such a State. By virtue of its own rationale, the integrity of a colonial or feudal State is always liable to modification depending on the waxing and waning of the sway of its ruler's sword vis-a-vis the rulers of other States, the rebellion of a chieftain, or struggle for national independence of a people from within. So, from the standpoint of democracy, what is inviolable is the national will of the people, integrally

or severally: the integrity of a State is inviolable so long as it is an embodiment of that national will.

The present-day semi-colonial semi-feudal State of India is, essentially a legacy of the British colonial State of India. The integrity of British India had been forged and maintained by dint of British colonial might, against the will of the emergent nations of the Indian subcontinent or the will of the Indian people in general. Even the States of the Indian Union and Pakistan respectively were carved out of British India in other words, they came into existence only by "violating" the integrity of the then State of India. Afterwards, the State of Bangladesh came into existence (leaving aside the aspect of Indian intervention) only by "violating" the integrity of the original State of Pakistan. There is nothing exceptional about the integrity of the present-day Indian State to make it alone sacrosanct. Moreover, the Indian rulers invoke this phoney inviolability of the integrity of the Indian State only when confronted with the prospect of some nationality's secession from India. They conveniently put it to sleep when they come across an opportunity for annexing some nationality to India, as happened in the case of the Sikkimese people. Evidently, the incorporation of the State of Sikkim is as much a modification of the integrity of the Indian State as would be the dissociation of a nationality, say the Mizo people, from India.

Thus, the so-called inviolability of the integrity of the Indian State is a figment of the Indian ruling classes, the big bourgeoisie and the landlords subservient to imperialism. It is a colonial-feudal assertion of the right of might which cannot invalidate the democratic right to national self-determination of any constituent nationality of India, least of all the right of

the Kashmiri people. If allowed to go unchallenged by democratic forces, it can only play an anti-national role of undermining the fragile bond of unity among the constituent nationalities of India by providing an ideological justification for disregarding and forcibly suppressing their national sentiments and aspirations.

Contrary social interests dictate contrary approaches to the Kashmir problem

The present-day Indian rulers and the Indian people, owing to their basically conflicting social interests, cannot afford to have an identical approach to the Kashmir problem. As on all vital political issues, on the Kashmir problem too, the oppressor Indian rulers and the oppressed Indian people are bound to get ranged against each other.

In India, there is no single dominant nation that oppresses other nations. The source of national oppression lies in the continuing colonial hold over India of various imperialist powers, particularly U.S. imperialism and Soviet social-imperialism, through the instrumentality of the lackey Indian ruling classes, the big bourgeoisie amid the landlords. That is to say, the Indian people, belonging to various nationalities and tribal communities, are all common victims of indirect imperialist oppression that restrains their overall national development as well as the particular development of each nationality. Thus, *there is no basic conflict of national interests among various peoples of India*. Rather, their respective national interests objectively converge on the common basic task of overthrowing the rule of imperialism and its subservient Indian partners, for opening up the path of their self-reliant democratic development (to be pursued, individually or collectively, on their own volition).

No doubt, there exist national prejudices, uneven levels of socio-economic development of various nationalities, relative neglect of small, especially border nationalities (in matters of allocation of national economic resources, access to job opportunities, and provision of more than symbolic participation in the national polity), cases of unwelcome influx of refugees and settlers to the traditional lands of some nationalities which undermines the national preponderance of the native people, and the prevalent tendency to disregard the national-cultural sensibilities of non-Hindi-speaking peoples. These elements of national inequality or discrimination exist, however, as a special aspect of the general phenomenon of national *oppression* of the Indian people as a whole by imperialism and its Indian lackeys in State power.

In other words, first, as regards the basic deprivation of national independence and prospects of national development, all the nationalities (without discrimination) are at the receiving end, irrespective of the incidence of relative discrimination. Secondly, even the elements of relative discrimination against some nationalities owe their existence to the retrogressive policies of the Indian rulers, who are multi-national in composition and anti-national in character. These elements are either the specific by-product of their general policies for promoting the semi-colonial, semi-feudal pattern of economic development, or the product of their specific policies for thwarting intra-nationality cohesion, internationality amity and solidarity of working people of all the nationalities. As the existence or non-existence of these elements of relative discrimination does not *determine*, either way, *the fate of national oppression* of each nationality and the Indian people in general, this factor or the struggle over it, in

itself, is of no strategic significance, either to the oppressors (the Indian ruling classes and their imperialist patrons), or to the oppressed (the Indian people).

Nevertheless, this factor, in connection with the struggle over the basic issue of national oppression, is of considerable significance to both insofar as it adversely affects the mutual relations of various nationalities in India. As it causes (or becomes a pretext for causing) misunderstanding, mistrust and estrangement among various nationalities, and thus hampers the consolidation of forces of all the oppressed peoples of India in the struggle for national liberation against their common oppressors, this factor operates against the basic interests of the Indian people and in favor of the Indian rulers. Hence, their own interests demand that the Indian people should unflinchingly oppose every manifestation of relative discrimination against any nationality of India.

It should be clear from the fore-stated features of the national question in India that the basic interests of the Indian people in general, as against those of the Indian rulers, are incompatible with the national oppression of or discrimination against any of the constituent nationalities of India. That is the objective basis for them to raise the banner of unity of all the Indian peoples in contest with the Indian rulers' banner of integrity of the Indian State. However, unless this objective basis finds tangible expression in their actual opposition to national oppression or relative national discrimination, the banner of all the Indian peoples' unity cannot acquire credibility with those nationalities who have grievances concerning relative discrimination or feelings of estrangement due to ill-treatment at the hands of the Indian rulers. And the most explicit, consistent and comprehensive version of such

an opposition is the firm stand of upholding the right of every constituent nationality of India to national self-determination. On the part of the common people belonging to any of the national groups, the upholding of the right of other nationalities to national self-determination is a way of politically demarcating themselves from the Indian rulers and clearing the decks for the united struggles of all the nationalities against the common national oppressors.

Therefore, unlike the oppressor ruling classes, only the oppressed people of India, most of all the working class, who have no vested interests in retaining or annexing any national territory against the wishes of its native people, can sincerely and consistently uphold the right of the Kashmiri people to national self-determination. The upholders of colonial-feudal oppression and exploitation be they rulers of India or of other lands may resort to transient political posturing in support of the Kashmiri people's right to self-determination just to entice the Kashmiri people, but they would soon come out in their true colors as die-hard opponents of this right.

The Indian rulers' earlier hypocritical stance of upholding the Kashmiri people's right to national self-determination and the subsequent volte-face on this issue has already come under mention. The conduct of the Pakistani rulers, in this respect, is no different either. Their loud protestations of support for national self-determination of Kashmiris in the India-held portion of Kashmir only, have all along been transparently insincere and mischievous and made in anticipation of a Kashmiri decision to join Pakistan on consideration of religion. Now, apprehending the possible repercussions in the Pak-held portion of Kashmir of the slogan of independent Kashmir that is arising from the valley, the Pakistani rulers

have unabashedly declared that the relevant U.N. resolutions (on holding referendum in Kashmir to decide the question of its statehood) do not stipulate the option of the Kashmiri people for an independent statehood. So much for the Pakistani rulers' upholding of the Kashmiri people's right to self-determination.

The other Fake protagonists of the Kashmiri national self-determination are the U.S. imperialist rulers and the British imperialist rulers who are greatly responsible for turning the Kashmir issue into a perennial political tangle a live-wire of tension between India and Pakistan that lends additional scope for their imperialist interference in and manipulation of Indo-Pak affairs. The U.S. imperialist rulers were keen, in the immediate post-World War II period, to get hold of Kashmir, because of its strategic location, as a military outpost against the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China (specifically, for setting up in the higher reaches of Kashmir an electronic surveillance-station to spy on the latter). To that end, they encouraged for a while the idea of an independent Kashmir and pushed the U.N. resolutions on holding referendum in Kashmir. Today, in the changed international situation and military technology, their earlier requirement has faded away, and they can be seen advocating the *bilateral settlement* of the Kashmir issue by India and Pakistan, on the basis of the Shimla Agreement, without any reference to the people of Kashmir whose statehood is the issue to be settled.

Thus, all these vultures, the various imperialist powers along with the client States of India and Pakistan, may very well adopt varying or conflicting stances on the Kashmir issue, according to their respective selfish considerations of the moment; still, their general social interests converge on the

basic approach of opposing the proper national self-determination by the Kashmiri people. The underlying reason for the imperialist ruling cliques to take that approach is not that there can be any threat to their neo-colonial hold, even in case of a separate State of Kashmir. That approach is imbued with the well-based apprehension that the involvement of the broad masses of Kashmiri people in the political act of deliberating and deciding the issue of their national Statehood, is likely to help them recognize the semi-colonial semi-feudal social basis of their national oppression and the anti-imperialist anti-feudal orientation of their struggle for liberation, i.e., the real substance of their national self-determination.

For what is the appraisal of the Kashmiri struggle required?

For upholding the right of the Kashmiri people to national self-determination, one need not go into the concrete political appraisal of the ongoing struggle of the Kashmiri people: because the defense of that right does not rest on one's political, appraisal of any particular struggle waged by the Kashmiri people in the quest for freedom from national oppression. That sort of political appraisal would be required for deciding one's attitude towards that particular struggle of the Kashmiri people. Therefore, differences of political perception or reservations regarding any aspect of the present Kashmiri struggle should not come in the way of upholding, without reservations, the *right* of Kashmiri people to self-determination. Upholding of that right without reservations does not mean giving a blank cheque of political support to any act or decision whatever of the Kashmiri people. The people of other nationalities are not supposed to forgo their

own democratic right of political opinion and discretion with respect to the Kashmir problem, in the process of defending the democratic right of the Kashmiri people. Upholding of that right without reservations simply means affirming the position that the Kashmiri people have the exclusive right to *decide* their own national status or destiny, and that any extraneous pressure or use of force to deny or distort the exercise of this right by the Kashmiri people is impermissible. In this respect, others are obliged to *respect* the decision of the Kashmiri people whatsoever and not necessarily concur with or approve of that decision. Moreover, others may politically influence the Kashmiri people, through fraternal suggestions, criticism and persuasion, to arrive at this or that decision; but they would be doing so strictly on the basis of the explicit assurance of respecting whatever decision the Kashmiri people prefer to take. Of course, the Kashmiri people would judge the genuineness of such fraternal concern and assurance not just by formal declarations of the same on the part of other people, but chiefly by their active opposition to the suppression of the Kashmiri voice.

No doubt, without making a political appraisal of the present struggle of the Kashmiri people, and without determining the nature and extent of support that is to be extended to this struggle on the basis of that political appraisal, the other people's upholding of the right of Kashmiri people to national self-determination would entail a fraternal support of a general and negative kind only. It remains a negative kind of fraternal support in the sense that they would be limiting themselves to opposing the Indian rulers' use of force to keep the Kashmiri people tagged to the Indian State, without making common cause with the Kashmiri people in the given

struggle. It remains a general kind of fraternal support in the sense that it would be extended to any mass effort (not the present one in particular) on the part of the Kashmiris (or of any other Indian people) to assert their national identity.

As is true of all political cases, in the case of the present struggle of the Kashmiri people too, positive fraternal support to this struggle would depend on whether, and to what extent, the common interests (of the people of all nationalities) get expressed in the struggle. To put it differently, to the extent the present struggle of the Kashmiri people gravitates towards challenging the socio-political source of their national oppression and thus acquiring an anti-imperialist and anti-feudal orientation, it would accordingly elicit the positive fraternal support from the people of all nationalities, that might extent up to the realization of a common front of struggle for overthrowing the rule of imperialism and native reactionaries.

Some outstanding aspects of the present Kashmir movement

The present Kashmiri movement presents a complicated political complexion. As yet, it is in a state of flux as regards its political objectives, leadership, alignment of forces and the course of action. Even as the process of crystallization of its political features is taking place amidst its whirling motion, some of its aspects are already evident. Basing on the noticeable aspects of the present Kashmiri movement, a broad political appraisal can be made for immediate purposes. There are some positive aspects wherein lies the strength of the present movement; but there are also some negative aspects that show its limitations and weaknesses as a national movement.

One outstanding positive aspect of the present Kashmiri national movement is the wide and intense involvement of the masses of Kashmiri people. The compulsive official lying, news-suppression and disinformation campaigns on the part of the Indian governmental authorities notwithstanding, almost every Indian or foreign eyewitness of the turbulent happenings in Kashmir over the recent months has testified to the mass character of the movement. Since the last quarter of 1988, especially with the massacres of January 21-22, 1990 (when thousands of peaceful demonstrators, protesting against the first large-scale police raids and searches of residential areas of Srinagar, were subjected to indiscriminate and vengeful shootings by paramilitary forces), the Kashmiri people have been demonstrating their mass defiance of the Indian State's authority, on every conceivable opportunity.

The most telling scenes of the Kashmiri people's determination, intensity of involvement, and fearlessness have been occurring more in the engagements between the paramilitary forces and the defiant unarmed masses of the people, than in the armed encounters between the bands of Kashmiri militants and the paramilitary forces. This aspect signifies that the present movement has roused the masses of Kashmiri people to political life. This development has wide political ramifications which go beyond the confines of the immediate context of the present movement. Already, owing to the involvement of the masses of the lower ranks of Kashmiri society the weavers, artisans, petty shopkeepers, petty government employees and sundry laborers etc, the echo of their social resentment against the tiny native crust of get-rich-quick contractors, corrupt politicians and bureaucrats (who fatten under the existing set-up and whose elitist life-

styles present a sharp contrast to the want and neglect of the people's own social existence) is coming tip in their outpourings of national resentment against Indian domination. In the immediate context of the present movement, this aspect lends the movement not only political weight, such that no serious political force in India can afford to take a dismissive attitude towards it, but also political stamina, such that the steamroller of Indian State power can no longer stamp it out, whatever vicissitudes the movement may have to undergo.

Another positive aspect of the present movement is that, despite the religious factor having a bearing on the movement, it is not overwhelmed by the communal tendency and has, in the main, preserved the non-communal tradition of the past struggles of the Kashmiri people. This seemingly unremarkable attribute of the present movement acquires significance in view of the considerable counter-pressure that certain circumstantial factors bring to bear upon it. The Indian ruling classes have, during the past decade, built up an atmosphere of communal mistrust and tension throughout the country. The way Hindu revivalism and communal chauvinism has been boosted and allowed to assume menacing proportions, it has aggravated the sense of insecurity among various religious minorities, especially the Muslim community, raised serious doubts among them about the professed secular character of the Indian State, and provided ample grist to the mill of minority communal chauvinism. The state of Jammu and Kashmir is the only Muslim-majority state in India. This fact makes it convenient for the Muslim communalist elements to make out the discrimination and humiliation of the Kashmiri people, at the

hands of the Indian rulers, to be the consequence of the religious bias of the Indian State. Such a view of the underlying cause of the national-social woes of the Kashmiri people is reinforced by the sly attempts of the Indian rulers to aggravate and exploit the contradictions between the Kashmiris and the Jammuities, and between the traditionally underprivileged Kashmiri Muslim population and the privileged stratum of Kashmiri Pandits (who used to have the lion's share in land-ownership in the princely State of Jammu and Kashmir and, today, find place in the top echelons of the all-India and state bureaucracy.)*

Then there are the Pakistani rulers who are openly and persistently after making it a communal problem by trumpeting their false concern and support for the rights of the "Muslim Umma", especially the Muslims of Jammu and Kashmir. And finally, the movement is under pressure from the native Muslim fundamentalist forces, chiefly the Jamaat-e-Islami and its military wing, the Hizbul Mujahideen, who are straining to the hilt to get a hold on the movement and

** How the Indian rulers themselves give a communal coloring to the Kashmir problem can be seen from the following seemingly innocuous statement of the Indian foreign minister. After pointing out that India has the second largest Muslim community in the world and that the Muslims in Kashmir formed a small segment of that, Mr Gujral said, "we cannot and shall not divide the country again on religious basis.... we cannot accept the idea that any part of India should be allowed to secede on the basis of religion (UNI, Indian Express, April 22, 1990) As if the Kashmir problem were rooted in the fact of it being a Muslim majority territory! As if the Indian rulers were inclined to "accept the idea... on the basis of some other factor but religion!!*

divert it onto the communalist rails. In the face of all these vitiating factors, it is not a mean achievement of the present movement that it has so far yielded not much ground to the communalist infection.

Another somewhat positive aspect of the present movement is that the idea of national "independence" has caught the imagination of the Kashmiri masses. The predominant popular mood is well-expressed in the refrain, "*Humein aur badshahi nahin chahiye*" (We don't need alien rule). Indian rule is definitively rejected. The longing for self-rule excludes a sponsored government of any clique of local parliamentary politicians. The Indian model of pseudo-parliamentary democracy stands discredited in the eyes of Kashmiri youth for its being not fair and representative enough, and in the eyes of the urban poor for its having no role in their woeful living conditions. (The following cryptic dialogue between a young Kashmiri militant and an Indian journalist depicts the typical state of mind of the urban youth:

Is he ready to die?"

"Of course."

"For Pakistan?"

"Not for Pakistan. not for India. For independence."

"Why not try the democracy you already have?"

"We've tried it. It doesn't work. For us, all politicians are fakes, liars, thieves."

- *India Today*, cover story, May 31, 1989.)

Contrary to the prevalent impression in other parts of India, the majority of Kashmiris are still not keen to merge with Pakistan. One of the reasons for taking such an impression is the involuntary tendency of common Indians to make no distinction between Pakistan and the Pakistan-held

part of Kashmir (same as they do in the case of India and Indian-held Kashmir). (Unlike the partition of the pre-1947 Bengal and Punjab that sealed the respective fates of these nationalities through the bloody communal exchange of populations, the Kashmiri nationality is merely divided by a cease-fire line and forcibly kept apart by the Indian and Pakistani armies. So, for the Kashmiris of the valley, the “*par*” (across the cease-fire line) stands primarily for the other half of their nationality and land. Their sense of identification with and attraction for the other half situated in Pakistan should not automatically be construed as their eagerness to merge with Pakistan. Despite serious estrangement with and anger against the Indian State, theirs is not a simple refrain that they want separation from India and amalgamation with Pakistan. The main emphasis is on the point that they are the ones, not India or Pakistan, who should decide the fate of Kashmir. That such sentiment is not restricted to the valley but also percolating to the other half of Kashmir, shows itself through the Muzaffarabad incident as reported by the *Statesman*, March 22, 1990: “...hundreds of students wanting total independence for Kashmir clashed in Muzaffarabad in Pakistan-held Kashmir yesterday with others seeking to unite it with Pakistan, local journalists said.” One of the reasons for the comparative popularity of the Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front lies in its stand of an independent Kashmir that reflects the wider layer of the popular sentiment.

The chief negative aspect of the present movement which many of its other limitations and weaknesses flow from or link up with, is its utterly rudderless character, ideologically as well as politically. The largely spontaneous character of the mass upsurge, that is the strong point of the movement in the

immediate context, becomes, in juxtaposition with the heterogeneity and political shallowness of the movement's present leadership a strategic liability. The spontaneous mass movement could at best express its social motives, negatively in their active rejection of Indian State authority, and positively only in hazy notions of independence and self-rule. Only the political leadership of the movement could lend definitiveness, clarity and expanse to such notions by setting forth the goals and orientation of the movement. But the only concrete programme that has been handed down to the mass movement by the political leadership as a whole is the two-point programme: ouster of the Indian Army and plebiscite. These may be rightful demands of the Kashmiri people and deemed fit to serve as a concise action programme the political means to realize some political-social objective. That political-social objective remaining undefined, the two-point programme of the leadership goes no further than the political perspective which the mass movement is already reflecting.

It is not strange on the part of the Muslim fundamentalist forces to cover up the bankruptcy of their social ideology and the obscurantist nature of their social designs by putting forward religious catch-words in lieu of the political social objectives of the movement. The slogan advanced by one of the sundry fundamentalist outfits, the Kashmir Al-Umar Mujahideen, is typical of their programmatic evasions: “*Al Umar ka matlub kya, la ilaha ilallah*” (The Al Umar stands for what, there is one God, the Absolute).

In this regard, the JKLF, which is the most important and comparatively well-organised of all the groups contending for political hegemony over the movement, comes out with a semblance of a political goal an independent, secular and

neutral State of Kashmir. In the case of JKLF too, "independent Kashmir" just means a State of Kashmir separate from India and Pakistan. The political content of this independence of the proposed Kashmir State is not even hinted at; leave aside the blacking out of the most vital aspect of the State character concerning democracy. With this stance, the question of national oppression and underdevelopment of the Kashmiri people is left essentially untouched. This inability or unwillingness of the present JKLF leadership to address itself to the substance of national oppression, and consequently of national self-determination i.e., of the placement of the Kashmiri people vis-a-vis imperialist neo-colonialism serves to tether the Kashmiri national movement to the level of its spontaneous political awareness.

This renders the movement ill-equipped to face the political pressures and intrigues of its crafty enemies and false friends. It indicates the essentially national reformist outlook of the present JKLF leadership, notwithstanding its taking to arms against the Indian State. Their eclectic manner of drawing inspiration from sources ranging from the Palestinian intifada to the recent East European developments only reinforces the above observation regarding the political outlook of JKLF leaders. This basic flaw in the JKLF leadership's political perception of the Kashmiri national question is the primary reason why it has not been able to make much headway in the rural areas of Kashmir. For, unlike the urban petit-bourgeoisie, it is extremely difficult to arouse the peasantry of Kashmir with the vague slogan of "independence" that does not connect with their concrete experience of national oppression and oppressors. (The same Kashmiri peasantry had, in the past, tremendously responded

to the anti-feudal call of struggle against the autocratic rule of Maharaja Hari Singh.) That is the reason why the JKLF leadership seeks support of other nations on the plea of justice but does not, and cannot, seek it from various nationalities of India and Pakistan, on the plea of common interests of liberation from national oppression. Having thus dropped the due claim to the fraternal support of the oppressed nationalities of India and Pakistan, the JKLF leadership is obliged to strike opportunistic alliances with, or conciliatory postures towards, those forces (the authorities of Pak-held Kashmir and the Muslim-fundamentalist groups of the India-held Kashmir) whose political objectives conflict with its own, in order to get support and help from across the ceasefire line.

The other outstanding negative aspect of the present movement is the failure of its mainstream to clearly demarcate itself from the communal- fascist actions of some Muslim-fundamentalist outfits, chiefly the Hizbul Mujahideen, who are following in the footsteps of the Khalistani communal-fascists, both in threatening and attacking the common people, and in playing into the hands of various imperialist agencies. These reactionary elements as yet constitute a small segment of the movement, and the scale and intensity of their anti-people actions are nowhere near the murderous onslaughts of Khalistani communal-fascists. Nevertheless, they are seriously harming the movement by vitiating the communal atmosphere in Kashmir and elsewhere and thus aiding the Indian rulers' efforts for defaming and isolating the movement at the all-India level. Moreover, due to the interplay of so many negative circumstantial factors and the serious political limitations of the JKLF leadership, there is quite a scope for

these forces to gain ascendancy in the movement and eventually drag it into self-destructive channels.

These elements are trying to cash in on another specific factor in the Kashmir situation. Although on the whole the present movement is not directed against the Hindu population of Kashmir, its support base is limited to Muslim, and there are almost as many non-Kashmiri Muslims in Jammu and Kashmir as there are *Kashmiri* Muslims. Presently the movement is mainly based on the Kashmiri Muslims for the obvious reason of its being a Kashmiri national movement. But the Muslim fundamentalist forces are striving to draw in the non-Kashmiri Muslims on the basis of religious appeal. If such an effort on their part is not effectively countered by the JKLF and other secular forces, through unambiguously asserting the Kashmiri national character of the movement, the scope for the growth of the communal-fascist trend will get enlarged. Because such an eventuality would not only go against the interests of the Kashmiri national movement but also undermine the unity of the people of Kashmir with the broad Indian people, demarcation from and condemnation of the communal-fascist trend is in the common interests of all the peoples, particularly the working masses of the peoples. However, this requirement should not be allowed to dilute or distract from their task of concentrating the blow against the Indian State-terrorism in Kashmir.

In sum, the Kashmiri people are on just grounds in their present struggle against the domination and the suppressive State-violence of the Indian rulers. Theirs is a valorous mass upsurge in defiance of Indian State authority. It is inspired by a vague longing for independence and self-rule. But its present main leadership, the JKLF, is failing it by default of matching

political orientation. Owing to its essentially national reformist political outlook, this leadership is pegging the Kashmiri national movement to the partial political aim of exercising formal self-determination, towards carving out a separate Kashmir State, without challenging the neocolonial grip of imperialism. Should it materialize, such a State of Kashmir would neither be really independent nor democratic. That would be a poor recompense for the great exertion and sacrifices of the Kashmiri masses, and, in effect, a betrayal of their longing for national emancipation. Only if the Kashmiri democratic forces having anti-imperialist anti-feudal political orientation gain ascendancy), and if the active fraternal support of all the oppressed Indian masses is secured on the basis of common interests, would the leadership of the Kashmiri national movement be able to withstand the strong enemy-pressure and challenge of Muslim-fundamentalist forces (some of whom are backed by the Pakistani and the Western imperialist agencies).

Hence, proceeding from the prime consideration of safeguarding the unity of the broad masses of Indian people and the Kashmiri masses against imperialism and its native lackeys, the Indian people should,

(a) Actively oppose the Indian State-terrorist onslaught against the Kashmiri people, demanding an immediate end to atrocities by Indian paramilitary forces on the Kashmiri public under the pretext of curbing Pak-instigated terrorist activities, withdrawal of Indian paramilitary forces from J & K, and cancellation of all black State promulgations that give extraordinary powers to the administration and the armed forces for repressing the Kashmiri people;

(b) Support the Kashmiri people's just struggle for self-

defense against the Indian State-terrorism;

(c) Condemn the communal-fascist actions of the Hizbul Mujahideen against the common people of Kashmir and encourage the secular and democratic forces in Kashmir to paralyze such elements;

(d) Unreservedly uphold the right of the Kashmiri people to national self-determination, urging upon the Kashmiri people to seek the unification of their nationality and self-determination on the basis of national independence from imperialism and democratic freedom from comprador-feudal autocracy without which their demand of plebiscite would take them nowhere, and to make common cause with the Indian people's democratic revolutionary struggle, while leaving it completely up to them to realize and decide or decide and realize what course they should take, and opposing forcible suppression of their rightful demand of plebiscite:

(e) Expose and oppose the intrigues of various imperialist powers towards distorting and utilizing the Kashmir problem for increasing their interference in and control of the political affairs of both India and Pakistan.

From "The Comrade" July-Sept., 1990

This article was written by Comrade Harbhajan Sohi

The Political Price of Suppressing the JKLF's Mass-March

This article from old files of "The Comrade" is reproduced here because it is relevant to understand some significant aspects of the reality about Kashmir. It exposes the basis of some often repeated lies against the struggle of Kashmiri people for self-determination.

It becomes more relevant amidst the news, again coming from POK, of marches under the leadership of JKLF to demand withdrawal of military of Pakistan and India from both parts of Kashmir. With slogans for independence of Kashmir, the protestors have marched towards the Line of Control. The Pakistani regime, putting aside its rhetoric of war with India on Kashmir issue, the Pakistani regime has again returned to use of lathicharge, tear gas and arrests. In this way the regime has acted according to the advices of 'international community' to keep borders 'tension free'. - Editor

The JKLF'S programme of crossing en masse the Line of Actual Control (LAC), as a demonstration of solidarity with their struggling compatriots in the India-held Kashmir, has rattled the political establishments of both India and Pakistan. Only the untenability and hypocrisy of the respective political stands of Indian rulers and Pakistani rulers on the Kashmir problem would explain how such a symbolic political act as the JKLF volunteers' pre-announced, unarmed attempt at crossing the LAC could cause so much diplomatic, political, and administrative furor in Islamabad and Delhi.

In Pakistan, the Nawaz Shareef government and all major political parties badgered the JKLF chairman Amanullah Khan with alarmed appeals to withdraw the call for the proposed mass-march on the grounds that it would be

“disastrous for the Kashmiri movement”. About forty thousand police and paramilitary forces were mobilized to foil the JKLF attempt to reach the LAC while the military units at forward positions were instructed to act as the final barricade to the protest march.

The Indian rulers' response to the JKLF march was all the more unwarranted, ridiculously out of proportion, and warlike. Utterances of the Indian authorities such as that any attempt to cross the line of control would “invite decisive retaliation” (Indian Foreign Minister Solanki, Indian Express, February 9), that “we won't allow them to come near the LAC” apart from being a display of their petty arrogance, amounted to drumming up of a war-atmosphere in India as if an invading army, rather than a mass demonstration, were marching on India. All the parliamentary opposition parties, as if testifying to the fact that they are a pack of political pygmies and lack the presence of a single bourgeois statesman, promptly rallied around the Narsimha Rao government in an all-party conference to stage a unanimous show of national chauvinism. They declared: “...the all-party conference, reflecting the united will of India, fully endorses the steps taken by the Government of India to defend the nation's integrity and unity...” and “Any violation of the line of control or the border must be resisted by all necessary means”. The most condemnable piece of chauvinist politics with communal undertones came rather than from the BJP as could be expected from the National Front chairman N.T.Rama Rao. Expressing solidarity with the Government, he appealed to the “Muslim fraternity that it is their bounden duty not only as worthy sons but also responsible citizens of this sacred soil to share the feelings... and honor our sentiment being born on the

same motherland”. This kind of singling out of a religious community for reminding it of its duty to the motherland is a sly way of expressing doubt about a hundred million Indians' loyalty to the country and blackmailing them into acquiescing in the chauvinist conduct of the ruling class politicians.

It is nothing new for the so-called parliamentary opposition in India to display its complete political identification with the government on the chauvinist plank of defending the “national unity and territorial integrity of India”. Still, the utter cheapness and fraudulence of the present all-party show became clear in the light of the fact that this time there existed no actual threat either to the security or to the unity and integrity of India. By the time the all-party conference was held, it had become crystal-clear to the Indian government, to the opposition parties, and even to all keen political observers with limited sources of information, that the Pakistani authorities were going to foil the JKLF's proposed mass-march to the LAC. The Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Shareef had conveyed the same to his Indian counterpart. Pakistani, Foreign Ministry had publicly declared its dissociation from and opposition to the JKLF's move. The Islamabad-based Indian media correspondents had reported the elaborate arrangements made by the Government of Pakistan to stall the march as well as the initial police lathicharges and firings on various mass contingents of the march. Moreover, it was already known that the U.S.A. and the E.C. countries had expressed their anxiety about the proposed JKLF march across the LAC and advised the Pakistani authorities to prevent such an occurrence. So, after knowing all that, the whole exercise of holding the emergency all-party conference and adopting a unanimous, chauvinist

posture was meant only for public consumption.

Anyhow, at the end of this triangular tussle, both the Indian and the Pakistani rulers, who apparently succeeded in their task of preventing the JKLF's march across the LAC, have nonetheless come out as political losers, whereas the JKLF has achieved its political objectives. The actual crossing or non-crossing of the LAC was not the real point of the JKLF's move. (In 1990, some of the volunteers succeeded in actually crossing the LAC with no comparable political effect relative to the present event.) The JKLF'S move was essentially a mass political challenge to the self-appointed guardians of the Kashmiri people on either side of the LAC which neither could meet as such. With a single deft political move, the JKLF has been able effectively to nail the duplicity of the Indian and Pakistani rulers' respective political stances.

The Indian rulers, who have been maintaining all along that the Kashmir problem is an internal affair of India and not at all an issue of international diplomacy, were shown up making it an object of international diplomacy by persuading outside powers to make the Pakistani government prevent the JKLF's mass march across the LAC. By doing so, they supplied a concrete proof of their duplicity in decrying or welcoming imperialist interference depending on whether it works against them or in their favor. Also, they thereby conceded to those powers the right to exert similar pressure on India too with regard to its handling of the situation in J&K, or for this or that kind of negotiated settlement of the Kashmir problem. For the argument of not allowing the Indo-Pakistani tensions to spill over into a military confrontation, which was invoked this time to put pressure on Pakistan, would cut both ways and remain a ready-made pretext for imperialist powers

to manipulate Indo-Pakistani affairs concerning in particular the Kashmir problem.

More significant is the shattering blow that has been rendered to the duplicity of the Pakistani rulers in playing at being the guardian angels of the Kashmiri people while cynically trying to utilize the national aspirations and sufferings of the Kashmiri people to serve the selfish ends of their reactionary regional tussle with India or of their internal factional fighting. Just a few days after their demagogic display on February 5 of unflinching solidarity with the Kashmiri people's struggle for national unity and self-determination, the Pakistani rulers were forced to come out in their true colors. They could be seen to be no less callous suppressors than the Indian rulers of any independent political manifestation of the Kashmiri people's will. As dozens of the marching Kashmiri militants were cut down by Pakistani army bullets, a shocking but invaluable political realization got indelibly registered in the minds of the Kashmiri people on either side of the LAC: The hand that used to be so generous in offering them guns to fight for their independence from Indian rule could be so quick and ruthless in training the guns at them at the preliminary gesture of their independence from Pakistani rulers. And that was precisely the principal political objective of the JKLF's action-plan of leading a mass-march across the LAC.

For the past one year or so, the JKLF has been passing through a tough time due to the two-pronged onslaught aimed at weakening their hold over the Kashmiri national movement. On the one hand, the JKLF bore the brunt of Indian state terrorism owing to its relatively pronounced mass political orientation; on the other hand, it was hard put to withstand the

sly but systematic efforts of the Pakistani rulers towards rendering it militarily handicapped and politically sidelined to the benefit of the pro-Pakistan outfits under the banner of Islamic fundamentalism. It was bound to remain at the receiving end unless and until the political pretensions of the Pakistani rulers concerning the Kashmiri cause were convincingly exposed. That opportunity presented itself out of a suitable set of circumstances. (These comprise the unsettling impact of the new international situation on Pakistan's strategic military relationship with U.S. imperialism; the intensified power struggle among various components of the Pakistani political establishment around the question of determining the new profile of the Pakistani state under the changed international environment; the enhanced sense of dissatisfaction among the bulk of Kashmiri public at the failure of the Pakistani rulers to measure up to the false expectations they themselves aroused in the Kashmiri mind; and the widespread feeling of indignation generated among the Kashmiris by the provocative Ekta Yatra of the BJP president to hoist the Indian flag in Srinagar's Lal Chowk.) And the JKLF could make the most of this set of circumstances by initiating an appropriate tactical-political move in connection with the eighth death anniversary of the founding chairman of the JKLF, Maqbool Bhatt, who was hanged to death by the Indian reactionary rulers on February 11, 1984.

The politically enlightening experience of direct mass action challenging the LAC that artificially divides the Kashmiri people should also help cure a section of the JKLF leadership of its illusions about the attitude of the western imperialist powers towards the Kashmiri people's national

aspirations. A considerable chunk of JKLF's leading cadres were swept off their feet in their naive exhilaration over the East European developments (particularly the demolition of the Berlin wall and the subsequent German unification) and over the Western world's effusive display of appreciation and support for those developments. So, they have been harboring great illusions about how the Western world would put their moral-political weight in support of the Kashmiri national movement and against its brutal suppression. The initial encouragement which had come from those quarters served to fortify such illusions. In the recent period, the major imperialist powers' changed priorities have also changed their tune. The emphasis shifted from concern about human rights violations in Kashmir to concern for the aggravation of tensions between India and Pakistan. The section of JKLF under discussion might also be vaguely feeling of late the changed winds. However, the shock of getting openly ditched by their false friends in the western capitals was reserved for the present occasion when the western powers not only pulled the strings in Islamabad to stop the JKLF's mass-march across the LAC but also gave a pat on the back to Nawaz Shareef after the unarmed marchers had been shot down by Pakistani security forces. A U.S. State Department spokesman said: "We are encouraged that the Government of Pakistan has taken steps to avoid confrontation along its borders" (February 13, 1992).

Thus, within a short span of a few days, the struggling masses of the Kashmiri people have received a condensed course of political education through their own experience. They have witnessed such seemingly diverse political forces as the Western imperialist powers, the Pakistani rulers, and the

Indian rulers rally against a democratic assertion of the Kashmiri will on the arbitrary Line of Actual Control. In the face of an indisputable fact that the LAC is not the International border between India and Pakistan but only a line of truce in the armed contention between the two states for the occupation of Kashmir, and the fact that the very U.N. resolution which lends legitimacy to the LAC upholds also the right of the Kashmiri people to unarmed crossing of the line, the respective governments of India, Pakistan and the U.S.A. treated the JKLF's march as if it were an attempted intrusion across the Indo-Pakistani border.

That is an indication of what is cooking in those capitals regarding the future of the Kashmiri people. They are conspiring to perpetuate the partition of Kashmir by turning the LAC into an international border between India and Pakistan through some kind of inter-state settlement behind the back of the Kashmiri people. The independence-loving Kashmiri people need not feel disheartened by the ganging up of those anti-people forces against their national cause. Today, they are in a better position to get a clear view of their enemies and friends. Once they are able to strike an access route to their real friends, they would surely make the conspiratorial plans of their enemies fall flat.

From "The Comrade" Oct. 1991-March, 1992

“The Indian rulers are very fond of referring to all sorts of diversity residing in the composite entity of India, but they invariably stop short of mentioning the national diversity of India. As if their unwillingness to acknowledge the obvious fact of India being a multinational country could do away with the national question in India! Well, their pretensions to running “the largest democracy in the world” come in the way of formally repudiating the right of nations to self-determination. So, by-passing the national question in India, they seek to dismiss the right of national self-determination by raising the battle-cry against “separatism” and asserting the inviolability of the integrity of the Indian State.”

“The cat is out of the bag. On August 5, New Delhi brought the long story of Indo-Kashmir relations to its climax; a story which has always been a story of treachery, betrayals and tyranny for people of Kashmir. Modi Shah regime has now manifested this policy of the Indian state in its crudest expression. It has thrown away the last traces of Nehruvian camouflage with contempt and is orchestrating the pure logic of the dacoit more openly; nevertheless it remains the same policy in content. The moral of the story is that the faces of dacoits and marauders are not compatible with masks. The latter, according to this moral, are the robes suitable only for the faces of the weak and the infirm.”